Science of the Soul in Ibn Sīnā's *Pointers and Reminders*

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TEXTS AND STUDIES

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Science of the Soul in Ibn Sīnā's *Pointers and Reminders*

A Philological Study

By

Michael A. Rapoport

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Chronology of Ibn Sīnā's Works

This list is limited to works cited in this study. All dates are derived from Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, wherein a complete bibliography can be found.

Sigla:
~ approximate dating
* earliest possible dating

~387/997	*Kitāb fī l-Nafs ʿalā sunnat al-iḫtiṣār*	*Compendium on the Soul*
	al-Birr wa-l-iṯm	*Piety and Sin*
	Risālat al-Tuḥfa	*Gift*
~390/1000	*Risāla fī l-ʿišq*	*Epistle on Love*
403/1013	*al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*	*Provenance and Destination*
~402–414/1012–1024	*al-Aḍḥawiyya fī l-maʿād*	*Immolation Destination*
~403–414/1013–1024	*al-Qānūn fī l-ṭibb*	*Canon of Medicine*
~404/1014	*al-Maʿād al-aṣġar*	*Lesser Destination*
404–405/1014–1015*	*ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*	*Elements of Philosophy*
414/1023	*al-Hidāya*	*Guidance*
~411–418/1020–1027	*al-Šifāʾ*	*Cure*
~417–418/1026–1027	*al-Najāt*	*Salvation*
~418/1027	*Dānišnāma-yi ʿAlāʾī*	*Philosophy for ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla*
~418–428/1027–1037	*al-Mubāḥaṯāt*	*Discussions*
~418–428/1027–1037	*al-Taʿlīqāt*	*Notes*
419–420/1028–1029	*Šarḥ Maqālat al-lām min Kitāb Mā baʿda al-ṭabīʿa li-Arisṭuṭālīs*	*Commentary on* Book Lambda *of Aristotle's* Metaphysics
419–420/1028–1029	*Šarḥ Kitāb Uṭūlūjiyā*	*Commentary on the* Theology of Aristotle
~421–425/1030–1034	*al-Išārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*	*Pointers and Reminders*
~428/1037	*Risāla fī Kalām ʿalā al-nafs al-nāṭiqa*	*On the Rational Soul*

Notes on Sources, Presentation, Transliteration, and Translation

For Ibn Sīnā's *Pointers and Reminders* (*al-Išārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*), I have relied on Zārīʿī's edition (Qum 2002). When necessary, I have compared it with Forget's edition (Leiden 1892), which Goichon relied on for her translation. When investigating discrepancies between Inati's translation and my own, I compare Zārīʿī and Forget with Dunyā's edition (Cairo 1968, vol. 4), which Inati used as the source for her translation.

To facilitate quickly identifying where I address a given pointer or reminder in each chapter, I identify each section based on its chapter (Roman numeral) and section (Arabic numeral), emphasized with bold text. For example, the first section of the eighth chapter of the *Pointers* appears as **VIII.1**. When parallel passages exist between the *Pointers* and other works by Ibn Sīnā, I present the parallel passages in chronological order (see the "Chronology of Ibn Sīnā's Works" for dates).

I refer to books, chapters, and sections within Ibn Sīnā's other works with a combination of Roman and Arabic numerals. For texts that have only sections, like *Lesser Destination*, I use only Roman numerals.[1] Ibn Sīnā's *Lesser Destination* appears alongside *Compendium of the Soul* and *On the Rational Soul* in Ahwānī (ed.), *Aḥwāl al-nafs: Risāla fī l-nafs wa-baqāʾihā wa-maʿādihā li-l-šayḵ al-raʾīs Ibn Sīnā*. References in the notes to *Lesser Destination* will appear simply as *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, while references to *Compendium* or *On the Rational Soul* will be identified specifically.

In translating Arabic and Persian, my aim has been to remain faithful to the original text while simultaneously presenting it in readable, natural English. In doing so, I have opted to exclude common epithets and honorifics (e.g., *taʿālā* when referring to God), although I have included these when providing the original Arabic or Persian. When it is necessary for clarity or style to insert language into English translations, [square brackets] indicate an explanatory insertion (e.g., to clarify a pronoun's antecedent), or a resumptive insertion

1 I consider the *Lesser Destination* to be an authentic Avicennan text. On its title and attribution to Ibn Sīnā, see Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 477–479. For an argument against the authenticity of some of its chapters, see Sebti, "Question." In a later study, Sebti acknowledges the *Lesser Destination* as "an authentic testimony of Avicenna's doctrine of the prophecy," albeit one that stands out in some places from the standard exposition of his doctrine; Sebti, *Avicenne*, 33n1.

(e.g., adding "This is" or "Because" when breaking a long sentence into shorter English ones); while ⟨angular brackets⟩ indicate the addition of text due to a presumed lacuna in the original. Explanations for the latter can be found in the footnotes. All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted; in such notes, "trans. mod." indicates when I have modified someone else's translation. All references to primary sources include the page number and line where the citation begins and ends (e.g., 335.1–3 refers to page 335, lines 1–3).[2]

In order to encourage careful, critical reading of the passages that I translate, and in recognition that not all readers of this study will have access to every text that I cite, I have included all of the original Arabic and Persian with my translations. Translations of long passages appear side-by-side with the original text. Shorter passages are transliterated, typically in the footnotes. In transliterating Arabic and Persian, I have followed a modified version of the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft rules, with the following modifications: I use *j* instead of *ǧ* for ج, and use *ay* and *aw* (instead of *ai* and *au*) for the diphthongs. I have excluded the definite articles of *nisba*s in names (e.g., Rāzī instead of al-Rāzī), except when citing an individual's full name.

When translating the following technical terms, I use capital letters in order to avoid confusion with their common, non-technical meanings in contemporary English: *al-ḥiss al-muštarak*, Common Sense; *al-ḫayāl*, Imagery; *taḫayyul* and *mutaḫayyila*, Imagination; *wahm*, *tawahhum*, and *mutawahhima*, Estimation; *ḏikr*, Memory; *mušāhada*, Experience; *tajriba*, Testing and Proving; *ḏawq*, Taste; and *ḥads*, Guessing Correctly.

2 Marmura's translation of the Metaphysics of the *Cure* has facing English and Arabic pages. Line-number references refer to the Arabic text.

Introduction

In a 2015 column published in the English-language periodical the *Daily Sabah*, Ibrahim Kalın asserts that for Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna, d. 428/1037), the means to reaching true knowledge is through "intellectual rigor on the one hand and spiritual refinement on the other;" in other words, one must "'think' with the philosopher and 'see' with the mystic."[1] He refers to Ibn Sīnā's final, comprehensive presentation of his philosophical system, the *Pointers and Reminders* (*al-Išārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*), as evidence of his mysticism. In this text, Kalın suggests, Ibn Sīnā contrasts the philosophers' intellectual, reason-based method of acquiring knowledge with that of the mystics, which is based on supra-rational "witnessing, experiencing, and 'tasting.'"

Kalın's interpretation of Ibn Sīnā's philosophy is but a recent example of a long-standing tradition of ascribing mysticism, esotericism, gnosticism, or Sufism to some of Ibn Sīnā's works. The *Pointers*, most especially the last three chapters (sg. *namaṭ*) of Book II,[2] is often cited as the most significant example of Ibn Sīnā's mysticism. We can trace the prominent role of these chapters in this regard to August Mehren's 1891 publication of them under the title *Mystical Treatises of Aboû Alî al-Hosain b. Abdallâh b. Sînâ, or Avicenna*; the Arabic edition's subtitle further reads "On the Secrets of Eastern Philosophy" (*fī asrār al-ḥikma al-mašriqiyya*).[3] In the following 130 years, scholars have written

1 Kalın, "Reading Ibn Sina in Ramadan."

2 Book I of the *Pointers* is devoted to logic. Book II comprises sections on natural philosophy (i.e., physics; chs. I–III), metaphysics (chs. IV–VI), and the Metaphysics of the Rational Soul (chs. VII–X). Each book consists of ten chapters, called *nahj* in Book I and *namaṭ* in Book II. All citations to the *Pointers* in this study are to chapters in Book II unless otherwise indicated.

3 Mehren, *Traités Mystiques*, 1891. Over the course of the decade 1889–1899, Mehren published in four volumes a number of treatises then believed to be by Ibn Sīnā under the title *Mystical Treatises*. These other texts include *Risālat Ḥayy b. Yaqẓān* ("Alive, Son of Awake"), *Risālat al-Ṭayr* ("Epistle of the Bird"), *Risāla fī l-ʿišq* ("Epistle on Love"), *Risāla fī māhiyyat al-ṣalāt* ("Epistle on the Nature of Prayer"), *Kitāb fī maʿnā l-ziyāra wa-kayfiyyat taʾṯīrihā* ("Book on the Meaning of 'Visitation' and How It is Effective"), *Risāla fī dafʿ al-ġamm mina l-mawt* ("Epistle on Dispelling Distress over Death"), and *Risāla fī l-qadr* [sic] ("Epistle on Destiny"). Shortly after the publication of Mehren's text, Gauthier cited it in support of ascribing an amalgam of mystical Sufism and Aristotelian psychology to Ibn Sīnā, one that resulted in the soul's experiencing ultimate happiness by becoming entirely absorbed in the "Divine Intellect;" Gauthier, *La philosophie musulmane*, 52–55, esp. 53. The subtitle of Mehren's publication does not actually appear in any of the works included therein; rather, it appears in Ibn Ṭufayl's (d. 581/1185–1186) rendition of *Ḥayy b. Yaqẓān*. On Ibn Ṭufayl's purpose in using such a title and the effect of Mehren's appropriation of it, see Gutas, "Ibn Ṭufayl on Ibn Sīnā's Eastern

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numerous articles, book chapters, and monographs either elaborating upon—or simply taking for granted—Ibn Sīnā's mysticism.[4]

This study aims to place Chapters VIII–X of the *Pointers* in the broader context of Ibn Sīnā's oeuvre, and in so doing will argue that these chapters are consistent with Ibn Sīnā's philosophy as developed in works representing his entire career. This will dispel two widespread notions—which I believe to be inaccurate—about *Pointers* VIII–X: 1) that they are unique, a uniqueness which makes the *Pointers* stand apart from the rest of Ibn Sīnā's corpus; and 2) that this uniqueness stems from the fact that these chapters represent Ibn Sīnā's mystical, Sufi, esoteric, or gnostic philosophy, or however else a departure from his standard philosophical system may be called. This study will suggest, furthermore, that they do not form a single unit or coherent whole within the text. Rather, they must be read in conjunction with the chapter that immediately precedes them. To the extent that we can meaningfully place the chapters of Book II of the *Pointers* into certain categories—something Ibn Sīnā, himself, did not do—we should group *Pointers* VII–X together in one such category, under the heading "Metaphysics of the Rational Soul."

In addition to contextualizing *Pointers* VII–X within Ibn Sīnā's corpus, this book will provide a method for studying this notoriously challenging and often misunderstood text. The need to do so is significant. Within the vastness of scholarship on Ibn Sīnā, there is a dearth of studies devoted specifically to the *Pointers*. Modern scholarship has concerned itself more with Ibn Sīnā's "masterwork" and literal *magnum opus*, the *Cure*.[5] This is despite the fact that the *Pointers* was for centuries at the heart of the reception of Ibn Sīnā's philosophy, to the point that Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) referred to it as the "holy book" (*zabūr*) of the philosophers.[6] This is not to say that we should ignore

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Philosophy." On the reason for translating *al-ḥikma al-mašriqiyya* as "Eastern" philosophy—as opposed to "Oriental" philosophy—see Gutas, "Avicenna's Eastern ('Oriental') Philosophy."

4 Notably, Inati gave her translation of *Pointers* VIII–X the title *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism* (more on this below). Netton remarks in his review of Inati's translation that the "mystical dimensions" of Ibn Sīnā's mature philosophy, as represented in the *Pointers*, have been well documented; "Review of *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*," 133. Hawi identifies "the fourth part" of the *Pointers* as dealing "in a systematic manner with Islamic Sufism (mysticism);" "Ibn Sina and Mysticism," 91.

5 The standard Cairo edition of the *Cure* (1952–1983, under the general editorship of Ibrāhīm Madkūr) consists of twenty-two large, densely printed volumes, each containing several hundred pages. In comparison, Mujtabā Zāriʿī's 2002 edition of the *Pointers* comes to about 350 pages of text. Forget's more densely printed edition (1892) has only about 220 pages. Adamson has called the *Cure* Ibn Sīnā's "masterwork;" "On Knowledge of Particulars," 273.

6 Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Fatāwā l-kubrā*, 6:508.2; citation found in Shihadeh, "Al-Rāzī's Earliest *Kalām* Work," 38.

the *Cure* or any other of Ibn Sīnā's works; rather, as we endeavor to understand better the Postclassical Era of philosophy in Islam (ca. 1200–1800), we should approach Ibn Sīnā in a manner similar to the untold number of scholars who, to paraphrase Michot, were infected with the "Avicennan pandemic": through the *Pointers and Reminders*.[7] If we do not understand Ibn Sīnā's most influential and popular work, we may not fully understand the major intellectual developments—including the reception, rejection, appropriation, and manipulation of Ibn Sīnā and his philosophy—that transpired in the centuries after his death. As this book will make clear, this will inevitably involve careful study not only of the *Pointers*, but also all manner of other works in Ibn Sīnā's corpus (which I believe to be precisely as Ibn Sīnā intended it).

1 Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism

Attributing mysticism to Ibn Sīnā did not begin with Mehren's publication of what he called Ibn Sīnā's mystical treatises. Within generations of Ibn Sīnā's death, scholars were actively involved in transforming his image to suit their needs. One such transformation was the mystical Ibn Sīnā, exemplified by the appearance of spurious correspondence between Ibn Sīnā and the mystic Abū Saʿīd ibn Abī l-Ḫayr (d. 440/1049), and by Ibn Ṭufayl's (d. 581/1185–1186) tendentious interpretation of Ibn Sīnā's "Eastern Philosophy" (*al-ḥikma al-mašriqiyya*) as a mystical philosophy.[8] Henry Corbin observes that the pre-modern Iranian philosophical tradition counted Ibn Sīnā among the mystics on account of his treatment of the "knower" (*al-ʿārif*) in the *Pointers*.[9]

Mehren's characterization of a subset of Ibn Sīnā's corpus as mystical reflects a once-dominant trend in the Orientalist study of Arabic philosophy: to see it as necessarily mystical because it was the product of the Semitic mind, which had a natural hatred of science and a natural genius for religious and mystical thought.[10] This was but a component of a broader decline narrative that

7 Michot, "La pandémie avicennienne."

8 On Abū Saʿīd ibn Abī l-Ḫayr and his correspondence with Ibn Sīnā, see Reisman, "The Ps.-Avicenna Corpus II: The Ṣūfistic Turn." On Ibn Ṭufayl's interpretation of Ibn Sīnā's Eastern Philosophy, see Gutas, "Ibn Ṭufayl on Ibn Sīnā's Eastern Philosophy." The Sufi Ibn Sabʿīn (d. 669/1270) would later assert that Ibn Sīnā's *Pointers* represents his "best work on Theology," but that it derives from Plato's *Laws* and the sayings of the Sufis. He acknowledged, however, that the *Pointers* was nonetheless for "training and research in philosophy;" Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 125–126.

9 Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, 205.

10 In a speech on Islam and science at the Sorbonne, Ernest Renan proclaimed that "what, in

19th-century scholars of Islam developed to explain what they saw as the triumph of theology and dogmatism over philosophy and science at the hands of Ġazālī (d. 505/1111) and his *Precipitance of the Philosophers*.[11] Generations of scholars had internalized this narrative before it came under widespread suspicion. While it no longer has credence among scholars of pre-modern Arabic philosophy, its pernicious effects remain; scholars and non-scholars alike still uncritically repeat aspects of it.[12]

While the Orientalist stereotype of Arabic philosophy's inherent mysticism may no longer enjoy widespread support, another train of thought that leads to similar conclusions remains prevalent. This thinking sees Ibn Sīnā as representing an Iranian intellectual tradition that had access to supra-rational knowledge of God, expressed through the term *ʿirfān*.[13] Seeing Arabic philosophy as

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fact, essentially distinguishes the Musulman is his hatred of science, the persuasion that research is useless, frivolous, almost impious;" Renan, *L'Islamsime et la science*, 20. Elsewhere, he argued, "the work of the Semitic race, considered in the totality of universal history … is evidently the preaching and founding of monotheism," which was "the result of a certain disposition of [the Semitic] race." Gauthier, speaking specifically of the "Jewish nation," quoted approvingly Renan's assertions in his *Introduction to the Study of Muslim Philosophy*. He later called Islam "the supreme effort and perfect expression of Arab genius;" Renan, "Nouvelles considérations," 214, 229; Gauthier, *Introduction*, 12, 59. Well prior to Renan, August Schmölders concluded that "the works of the Arabs on this matter [philosophy] are second-rate. There is not a philosophical genius among them;" Schmölders, *Essai*, 9. Not all were fully in agreement on this point, however. Gustave Dugat saw it fit to count Ibn Sīnā as the one exception; Dugat, *Histoire*, XII, note 2. For the enduring effect of the Orientalist study of Arabic philosophy, see Mahdi, "Orientalism"; Gutas, "The Study of Arabic Philosophy."

11 For the historical context and current, critical response to the decline narrative, see Griffel, *Formation*, 1–20. I follow Griffel's example, in response to Alexander Treiger's convincing argument, of translating *tahāfut* as precipitance; Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge*, 108–115; Griffel, *Formation*, 5n13.

12 On the enduring influence of the decline narrative, see Brentjes, "Prison." Neil deGrasse Tyson, the astrophysicist and prominent public intellectual, has repeated the decline narrative in speeches, emphasizing Ġazālī's influence—particularly his denial of causation—as the moment that scientific inquiry ended in Muslim societies. One such speech is available on YouTube at https://youtu.be/wp6cnp1kZBY (accessed 03/31/2022). He begins to address Islam and science around the one-hour mark.

13 Miguel Cruz Hernández argues that Ibn Sīnā's works must be viewed as representing both Peripatetic and esoteric Irano-Islamic traditions. Certain of his works, he says, have a markedly different character than his standard Peripatetic works and thus require a different method of analysis. "The resulting interpretation would constitute the intimate thought most unique to Avicenna, more rooted in the Irano-Islamic tradition than what is shown in the works that continue the Hellenic tradition;" Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 68. Cruz Hernández considers *Pointers* IX–X to be among Ibn Sīnā's esoteric, Irano-Islamic works.

necessarily mystical as a result of the Semitic mind does not exclude also seeing it as a product of Iranian thought. In discussing the influences on Arabic philosophy, Léon Gauthier mentions Sufism, which he characterizes as a mystical pantheism of Persian origin, and which he saw as having its greatest effect on the "Persian" Ibn Sīnā.[14] Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī connects the *Pointers* to Ibn Sīnā's "Eastern Philosophy" (*al-ḥikma al-mašriqiyya*), which he characterizes as a failed revolutionary ideology. This revolutionary ideology contained a spiritual gnosticism which, he avers, "killed reason and logic in the Arabic consciousness for centuries" and led Arabic thought to recoil from an "open-minded rationalism" (*al-ʿaqlāniyya al-mutafattiḥa*) to a "lethal irrationalism" (*lā ʿaqlāniyya qātila*), thereby paving the way for future attacks on rationalism by the likes of Ġazālī.[15]

Among modern scholars, however, Henry Corbin was one of the most influential proponents of interpreting Ibn Sīnā's philosophy as part of an Irano-Islamic esoteric tradition, especially through his *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*.[16] Corbin's *AVR* focuses primarily on Ibn Sīnā's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, *Epistle of the Bird* (*Risālat al-Ṭayr*), and his allusion to the allegory of Salāmān and Absāl in the *Pointers and Reminders*.[17] On the *Pointers*, however, he remarks that *Pointers* IX elaborates the stations of the gnostics (*ʿārifūn*), and concludes therefrom that the *Pointers* is distinct from the *Cure* and *Salvation*.[18] For Corbin, Ibn Sīnā's mysticism is so obvious that scholars who deny it are woefully mistaken; for some of them, their error is motivated by creed.[19] Annemarie Schimmel, citing Corbin, noted the irony that Ibn Sīnā "has become the representative of dry rationalism, although he was as much of a mystical thinker as some of those classified as Sufis."[20]

After Corbin, one of the most prominent voices attributing mysticism to Ibn Sīnā, and identifying *Pointers* VIII–X as being mystical, has been that of

14 Gauthier, *La théorie d'Ibn Rochd*, 28. On this, see again Gutas, "The Study of Arabic Philosophy."

15 *qatalat al-ʿaqla wa-l-manṭiqa fī l-waʿī l-ʿarabī li-qurūnin ṭawīlatin*; Jābirī, *Naḥnu wa-l-turāth*, 165.

16 On Corbin's "phenomenological and anti-historical" approach to the study of Islamic mysticism, see Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, 16–18; and Gutas, "The Study of Arabic Philosophy," 16–19.

17 On *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* and/or *Risālat al-Ṭayr*, in addition to Gutas's study (cited above), see Jacobsen Ben Hammed, "Ethics and Aesthetics"; Stroumsa, "The Makeover of *Ḥayy*"; and Heath, *Allegory and Philosophy in Avicenna*.

18 Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, 205.

19 Corbin, xii.

20 Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 19.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr.[21] Magnifying his voice have been those of his students, including Ibrahim Kalın, Mehdi Aminrazavi, Parviz Morewedge, and William Chittick. This is not to say that Nasr et al. are the only scholars who find mysticism, esotericism, gnosticism, or Sufism in Ibn Sīnā's philosophy, particularly as it is expressed in the *Pointers*. Numerous other scholars have characterized the final three chapters of the *Pointers* as one of Ibn Sīnā's Sufi, mystical, or esoteric texts.[22]

Nasr has been advocating the theory of Ibn Sīnā's mysticism in works that span the entirety of his long and prolific career. In *Three Muslim Sages* (1963), he observes that in the last three chapters of the *Pointers*, Ibn Sīnā "has given one of the best formulations of many of the cardinal doctrines of Sufism," concluding that from the study of this and other supposedly esoteric works "one can discern some of the distinguishing features of Avicenna's 'esoteric' philosophy."[23]

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21 Massimo Campanini's study of Islamic philosophy evinces the enduring influence of Corbin and Nasr, whom he cites when asserting, "certainly one cannot negate (as has also been emphasized beyond measure by historians like Henri Corbin and Seyyed Nasr) that mystical reflections of the theosophy of the hierarchy of light were not strangers to Avicenna's thought;" Campanini, *La filosofia islamica*, 56–57. In an earlier work, Campanini characterized the *Pointers* as "appear[ing] to show the development in the author's thought of a more esoteric and mystical viewpoint" through a study of "the Gnostic's (*'ārif*) path to spiritual perfection;" Campanini, *An Introduction to Islamic Philosophy*, 17. For a critical review of this latter book, see Gutas, review of *An Introduction to Islamic Philosophy*.

22 There are myriad such assertions spanning the entire era of modern scholarship on Ibn Sīnā, making a comprehensive account of such claims unfeasible. I provide here only a sampling, in chronological order: J. Houben questioned whether the compatibility between Ibn Sīnā's mysticism "was at all genuine notwithstanding the scholarly explanations of it … most of all in the last chapters of his great work, *Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa-l-Tanbīhāt*"; Houben, "Avicenna and Mysticism," 1953, 3; reprinted in "Avicenna and Mysticism," 1956, 207. Soheil Muhsin Afnan characterizes the final chapters of the *Pointers* as "avowedly mystical thought;" *Avicenna: His Life and Works*, 187. George Hourani categorizes the last part of the *Pointers* as one of Ibn Sīnā's esoteric, mystical works; "The Secret of Destiny," 42. Majid Fakhry observes that in the ninth chapter of the *Pointers*, Ibn Sīnā "dwells on the 'stations of (mystical) knowers,' with some insistence;" "The Contemplative Ideal in Islamic Philosophy," 141. Chittick asserts that Ibn Sīnā represented "his esoteric teachings in such works as … the last chapters of *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*;" "Mysticism versus Philosophy," 97. Salvador Gómez Nogales identifies the *Pointers* as "the principal source for mystical theory in Ibn Sīnā." He confidently stated that everyone recognizes the *Pointers* as an authentically mystical text and that there is no doubt that Ibn Sīnā was a theorist of mysticism, adding, "We can affirm without beating around the bush that Avicenna was a theorist of mysticism;" "El misticismo persa de Avicena," 72, 79, 84. Maha Elkaisy-Friemuth asserts that the "Sufi part" of the *Pointers* describes the soul's mystical ascent to union with divine light; *God and Humans in Islamic Thought*, 74–118, esp. 77.

23 Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages*, 43.

In his *Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines* (1978, rev. ed.), Nasr identifies the last three chapters of the *Pointers* as belonging to a subset of Ibn Sīnā's works that have a "different character" (read: esoteric, mystical character) from his standard Peripatetic works, like the *Cure* and the *Salvation*.[24] This esoteric character is supra-rational, as it "make[s] use of logic and the rational faculties of man to lead man above and beyond these faculties and planes."[25] In his *The Islamic Intellectual Tradition in Persia* (1996), Nasr makes the wholly unsubstantiated observation that "probably half of the great scientists of Islam followed gnostic traditions … even people like Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn and Ibn Sīnā, both of whom had strong inclinations toward Sufism and gnosis."[26] Later in that work, he characterizes *Pointers* IX as "one of the most intellectually lucid and powerful defenses of Sufism in Islamic history."[27] Most recently, Nasr reiterated his characterization of the ninth chapter of the *Pointers* as "the strongest intellectual defence provided by a major Islamic Peripatetic philosopher of Sufism and gnosis" as reason for including a translation of Ṭūsī's commentary on that chapter in the fourth volume of *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia* (2013).[28]

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24 Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, 181.

25 Nasr, *Sufi Essays*, 55.

26 Nasr, *The Islamic Intellectual Tradition in Persia*, 40. This echoes an earlier assertion that Ibn Sīnā and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī were both "philosopher-mystics;" Nasr, *Sufi Essays*, 160.

27 Nasr, *The Islamic Intellectual Tradition in Persia*, 84. In the same year, he called *Pointers* IX "the most powerful defence of Sufism by any of the Islamic philosophers;" Nasr, "Introduction to the Mystical Tradition," 368. According to Nasr, this was part of Ibn Sīnā's project of "Oriental Philosophy" (*al-ḥikma al-mašriqiyya*). Nasr insists that the title of one of Ibn Sīnā's works that falls under this project, *The Logic of the Easterners* (*Manṭiq al-mašriqiyyīn*) "could also be read as *mushriqiyyīn* in Arabic, the latter meaning illuminative" and therefore esoteric and mystical. Despite acknowledging Nallino's "linguistically correct" refutation of such a reading, Nasr maintains that it does not take into account the profound symbolism found in Ibn Sīnā's language; Nasr, *The Islamic Intellectual Tradition in Persia*, 129. Nasr (along with Aminrazavi) later asserts that the Arabic orthography of *al-ḥikma al-mašriqiyya* "can be read … as either oriental or illuminative," disregarding Nallino's definitive argument against this; Nasr and Aminrazavi, *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia*, Vol. 1, 1: From Zoroaster to ʿUmar Khayyām:244. For Nallino's refutation of reading *mašriqiyya* as *mušriqiyya*, see his "Filosofia 'Orientale' od 'Illuminativa' d'Avicenna?"

28 Nasr and Aminrazavi, *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia*, Vol. 4, 4: From the School of Illumination to Philosophical Mysticism:176. Given the massive volume of Nasr's publications, it would be impractical and superfluous to refer to all instances in which he has proffered the theory of Ibn Sīnā's mysticism as expressed in the *Pointers*. The references adduced, however, provide a representative sample of the consistency and content of the claims that he has made throughout his career.

Several of Nasr's students have similarly taken up the banner of advocating for a mystical, esoteric, Sufi Ibn Sīnā, generally, and a mystical interpretation of the last three chapters of the *Pointers*, specifically. There is, of course, Ibrahim Kalın, with whom I opened this book. While this anecdote comes from a popular medium, Kalın has made the same assertions in his scholarship: "Ibn Sīnā attempts to construct a theory of mystical knowledge in a famous section of the *Ishārāt* called *Māqamāt al-ʿārifīn* where he explores and eventually approves of the legitimacy of the mystics' claim to veritable knowledge."[29] Mehdi Aminrazavi has associated Ibn Sīnā with Suhrawardī, claiming that they followed the same path when it comes to mysticism.[30] He locates indubitable evidence of Ibn Sīnā's mysticism, *inter alia*, in "the fourth chapter" of the *Pointers*, which is devoted "to Sufism and *ʿirfān* (he [Ibn Sīnā] uses them interchangeably)."[31] Parviz Morewedge has argued that when it comes to Ibn Sīnā and mysticism, it is hard to ignore the *Pointers*, wherein "mystical and classical doctrines are discussed extensively."[32] He identifies the ninth and tenth chapters of the *Pointers* as the places where Ibn Sīnā "designates the stages of mystical union and differentiates, in addition, between the mystic (*ʿābid*) and the believer (*zāhid*)."[33] Chittick sees the final chapters of the *Pointers* as an expression of Ibn Sīnā's "esoteric teachings" in which he theorizes "special modes of knowledge open to mystics … but not accessible to the unilluminated intellect."[34]

Not surprisingly, many scholars have likewise written works voicing the opposite position. According to them, mysticism is nowhere to be found in Ibn Sīnā's philosophy; what's more, they say, he was a harsh critic of Sufis and

29 Kalın, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy*, 203. Kalın then asserts that the role of the active intellect in Peripatetic philosophy provided room for mystical epistemologies, and implies that this is the case for Ibn Sīnā. As will become clear over this study, I agree with Kalın that Ibn Sīnā may have found some mystics' claims to veritable knowledge to be true, but disagree that he did so by providing a theory of Sufism.

30 Aminrazavi, "How Ibn Sīnian," 212. Suhrawardī himself, however, was highly critical of what he saw to be Ibn Sīnā's strict Peripateticism. Wasserstrom goes even farther than Aminrazavi, attributing a "philosophical mysticism known as 'Illumination' (*Ishrāq*)" to Ibn Sīnā; Wasserstrom, "Jewish-Muslim Relations in the Context of Andalusian Emigration," 71.

31 Aminrazavi, "How Ibn Sīnian," 210. By the "fourth chapter," Aminrazavi inaccurately conflates Dunyā's division of Book II of the *Pointers* into four volumes with the actual structure of the work. Dunyā's fourth volume comprises *Pointers* VIII–X (more on this in section 4.1). On the inaccuracy of the statement that Ibn Sīnā uses Sufism and *ʿirfān* interchangeably in the *Pointers*, see Rapoport, "Sufi Vocabulary, but Avicennan Philosophy," esp. 149–156.

32 Morewedge, *The Mystical Philosophy of Avicenna*, 66.

33 Morewedge, 85.

34 Chittick, "Mysticism versus Philosophy," 87, 97.

their methods.[35] While such arguments appeared not long after Mehren's publication of his *Mystical Treatises*—most notably by Carlo Alfonso Nallino[36]—, the number of scholars questioning Ibn Sīnā's mysticism has grown over the past few decades. This is despite claims by proponents of Ibn Sīnā's mysticism that the debate has been resolved.[37] Foremost among them has been Dimitri Gutas, who has consistently argued that Ibn Sīnā was not an esotericist since publishing an entry on Ibn Sīnā and mysticism in the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. Shortly thereafter, the first edition of Gutas's *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* appeared.[38] David Reisman, a student of Gutas, attempted to trace what he called the "Ṣūfistic Turn" in the reception of Ibn Sīnā through the spurious correspondence between him and the Sufi Abū Saʿīd ibn Abī l-Ḫayr.[39] Herbert A. Davidson, speaking of the equation of Ibn Sīnā's *ʿārif* with a mystic, asserts that *Pointers* IX is little more than an allusive presentation of the positions found in Ibn Sīnā's "technical philosophic" works.[40] Peter Adamson addressed the question of Ibn Sīnā and mysticism in his commentary on the *Theology of Aristotle*, finding no evidence for a mystical epistemology.[41] Most recently, Jules Janssens has published the only analysis that I am

35 In a letter to the scholars of Baghdad, Ibn Sīnā criticizes another scholar's disappointing work on theology as "strange, suitable for Sufi-talk;" Yarshater, *Panj risāla*, 74. He likewise negatively juxtaposes the talk of Sufis with the talk of philosophers in the Physics of the *Cure*; *al-Šifāʾ: al-Samāʿ al-ṭabīʿī*, 1:21.4. Both references are in Gutas, "Avicenna's Eastern ('Oriental') Philosophy," 163n14.

36 Nallino, "Filosofia 'Orientale' od 'Illuminativa' d'Avicenna?"

37 Cf. Nasr, who claimed that Corbin (in *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*) "put an end once and for all" to the debate about Ibn Sīnā's mysticism and so-called "Oriental Philosophy," about which he stated "what Ibn Sīnā had in mind was not a harmless addenda [*sic*] to Peripatetic philosophy with an 'eastern' flavor in the geographic sense of the term but the reconstruction of that theosophy which is at once illuminative and Oriental, in the symbolic sense of Orient;" Nasr, "Ibn Sīnā's Prophetic Philosophy," 85–86.

38 Gutas largely treats questions of mysticism and Ibn Sīnā's "Eastern Philosophy" in the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* entry, mentioning the *Pointers* only in passing; Gutas, "AVICENNA v. Mysticism;" reprinted with slight revisions in "Avicenna: Mysticism and the Question of His 'Oriental' Philosophy." Gutas addresses this again in the introduction to the first edition of *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, and in a section on the allegedly mystical method that Ibn Sīnā employed in his esoteric writings; Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 1st Ed., 3–5, 306–307, 2nd Ed. (2014), pp. XXI–XXIII, 343–347. His most recent contributions to this debate include "Imagination and Transcendental Knowledge in Avicenna" and "Intellect without limits"; both reprinted in *Orientations of Avicenna's Philosophy*.

39 Reisman, "The Ps.-Avicenna Corpus II: The Ṣūfistic Turn."

40 Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect*, 105n125.

41 Adamson, "Non-Discursive Thought."

aware of that is specifically on *Pointers* VIII–X, concluding that they do not represent a move toward mysticism.[42]

In addition to what we may call the Corbinian and Gutasian approaches, there are many scholars who have developed theories of what has variously been called rationalist, intellectual(ist), and philosophic(al) mysticism.[43] Majid Fakhry offers a typology of three mysticisms in Islam, each one differentiated from the other based on their ultimate aim. The aim of what he called philosophical mysticism is "conjunction" (*ittiṣāl*) with the active intellect, which Fakhry opposes to the union or identification with God that he claims Sufis strive for.[44] David Blumenthal articulates an "intellectualist/philosophic mysticism," specifically in relation to Maimonides, in which there is a post-intellectual, post-cognitive piety that consists of what he calls a meditative, spiritual, and mystical mode of worship. As with Fakhry, central to Blumenthal's intellectualist/philosophic mysticism is what he calls "connection/contact/conjunction" (*ittiṣāl*) between human and divine intellect.[45] Diana Lobel observes that the distinction between an intellectualist and a Sufi mysticism has been subject to criticism. Berndt Radtke, for example, has questioned whether any Sufis actually advocated union/identification (*ittiḥād*) with God, or whether this is something that non-Sufis, like Ibn Sīnā, merely ascribed to Sufis.[46] Lobel also asserts that we cannot distinguish between a Neoplatonist mysticism—which grounds the notion of intellectual mysticism and which culminates in union with the divine—with Sufi mysticism, since both "describe a union with God that transcends reason."[47] Such criticisms in mind, Lobel proposes a differentiation between intellectualist and philosophical mysticism. The former, she says, applies to such Aristotelians as al-Fārābī, Ibn Bājja, and Maimonides. These scholars identify reason as the essence of the human being, maintain that the intellect survives the death of the body, and that in so doing the intellect achieves ultimate fulfillment (*saʿāda*). Philosophical mysticism, on

42 Janssens, "Philosophical Mysticism."

43 Blumenthal suggests that Ibrāhīm Madkūr may have been the first to use such a term; Blumenthal, "Maimonides' Intellectualist Mysticism," n3; citing Madkūr, *La place d'Alfarabi*, 186, 188.

44 For Fakhry, Ibn Sīnā is a representative of philosophic mysticism; Fakhry, "Three Varieties of Mysticism in Islam," 194.

45 He makes the cases in similar terms, and relying on similar evidence, in Blumenthal, "Maimonides' Intellectualist Mysticism"; "Maimonides"; "Philosophic Mysticism"; and "Maimonides' Philosophic Mysticism."

46 Lobel, *A Sufi-Jewish Dialogue*, 22; citing Radtke, "How Can Man Reach the Mystical Union?," 177, 187.

47 Lobel, *A Sufi-Jewish Dialogue*, 23.

the other hand, is broader than intellectualist. It applies to those who prioritize both the intellect's union with the divine and the affective response to that: "feeling, imagination, heart, and spirit." Such scholars "bridge the paths of Sufi devotional mysticism and philosophy."[48] Philosophy, in this context, prepares one to experience the divine world.[49] Ibn Sīnā, it seems, would be a philosophical mystic: "The Sufi experience depicted by Avicenna in his writing about the adept is like seeing the world in living color."[50]

Of course, not all scholarship on Ibn Sīnā and mysticism neatly falls under the interpretive frameworks that I have discussed; nor have I provided a comprehensive survey of the scholarship here. Rather, my aim is to highlight that these frameworks have been and remain the predominant perspectives on this subject.

1.1 *Defining (Ibn Sīnā's) Sufism and Mysticism*

In order to assess whether the final chapters of the *Pointers* and, more broadly, Ibn Sīnā's philosophical system can accurately be characterized as mystical or Sufi, I will first propose a means to understand these terms as they relate to Ibn Sīnā. Alexander Knysh has observed that "a comprehensive and exhaustive definition of Sufism remains elusive" and implies that any efforts to articulate such a definition would be "futile;"[51] the same, I would add, may be said of mysticism.[52] As such, I shall not attempt to provide a definition for either, but

48 Lobel, 24.

49 There is overlap here between Lobel's philosophical mysticism and Blumenthal's "intellectualist/philosophic." Blumenthal repeatedly emphasizes philosophy's preparatory character, in Maimonides's schema, for post-rational/intellectual worship.

50 Lobel, *A Sufi-Jewish Dialogue*, 24.

51 Knysh, *Sufism*, 35–61 (for discussion), 229 (for quote). Scott Kugle has similarly observed that there "exists no firm scholarly consensus" on the meaning and usage of the term Sufi; Kugle, *Rebel*, 27. This challenge may result, in part because, as Carl Ernst remarks, "Sufism is not a thing one can point to; it is instead a symbol that occurs in our society, which is used by different groups for different purposes;" Ernst, *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism*, xvi.

52 Pierre Hadot observes that "in general, a complete confusion reigns among contemporary authors in the use of this qualifier," referring to "mystical;" Hadot, "Niveaux," 243. Schimmel points to the difficulty of defining mysticism by observing that "such definitions, however, merely point our way. For the reality that is the goal of the mystic, and is ineffable, cannot be understood or explained by any normal mode of perception; neither philosophy nor reason can reveal it;" Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 4. Michael Ebstein observes that "there is no one definition of the mystical experience, and its character or nature may differ from one religious movement to the other." While acknowledging the challenge of applying the "Western-Christian" concept of mysticism to the study of Islam, he sees no benefit in renouncing the term, and argues that no serious alternative has been proposed.

instead will offer certain concepts the presence of which may warrant calling a given philosophy Sufi or mystical. In order to avoid the reductivist tendency to equate Sufism and mysticism—something Nile Green has argued "robs the Sufis of the multiplicity of skills that helped them succeed"—I will present separate lists of concepts for both mysticism and Sufism.[53]

1.1.1 Sufism

In his recent history of Sufism, Knysh offers several "constants"—major ideas, practices, and values—that are shared by and found in Sufi communities, while acknowledging the incompleteness of any such list.[54] The list, which I paraphrase and to which I add material from other discussions, is as follows:

1. The reality of "supersensory, intuitive, revelatory knowledge and experience of God and the world." This knowledge is "concerned with the esoteric (that is, accessible to the elite few) aspect of the revelation."[55]

He characterizes mysticism as a "useful" and "fluid" category, a "kind of a coordinate that allows scholars to situate certain religious movements in the general 'map' of any given religion;" Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, 22. Sara Sviri similarly sees no value in replacing mysticism with either a neologism or with a term like "spirituality." Mysticism in the Islamic context can be understood as "a current within religions and cultures associated with voluntary efforts aimed at gaining an intensified experience of the sacred;" Sviri, "Sufism," 19–20. In another study, she offers a "simplified, yet adequate" definition of Sufism: "a practical and devotional path that leads to the transformation of the self from its lowly instinctual nature to the state of subsistence in God;" Sviri, "The Self," 196. The difficulty surrounding mysticism as an academic category is longstanding, with an anonymous essay in the *Edinburgh Review* (1896) observing—in a manner still pertinent to the study of mysticism in Arabic and Islamic philosophy—, "There are certain terms of general classification that seem predestined to breed confusion in criticism and thought; and among these the term Mysticism might be almost considered one of the most preeminently bewildering." On the development and changing meaning of mysticism, see Leigh Eric Schmidt, "The Making of Modern 'Mysticism'" (276 for the passage from the *Edinburgh Review*).

53 Green, *Sufism*, 55. As Anna Akasoy observes, "narrowing *taṣawwuf* [Sufism] down to the mystical experience does not do full justice to the multiplicity of ways in which *taṣawwuf* was … understood by Muslims in the medieval period;" Akasoy, "What Is Philosophical Sufism?," 234n27. On one of those ways, renunciation and renunciants among early Sufis, see Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 1–7. Kugle is similarly critical of scholars who equate Sufis with mystics; Kugle, *Rebel*, 36. Sviri argues, on the other hand, that "if the terms [mystics and mysticism] apply to Sufis and Sufism as they have become known from, approximately, the second half of the third/ninth century on, then yes: Sufism is, without doubt, a mystical current within Islam;" Sviri, "Sufism," 20.

54 Knysh, *Sufism*, 59.

55 Knysh, 60.

2. Sufis and the broader Muslim community accept the claims to the knowledge mentioned above.
3. This knowledge may be imparted to others "by means of certain meditative techniques and bodily regimes."[56] These include "practices of *adab* (etiquette), *dhikr* (chanting), and *muraqaba* (meditation),"[57] as well as "fasts, prayers, vigils, … [and] periods of seclusion."[58] To this may be added *riyāḍa*, often understood as "spiritual exercises." These are to be done in addition to prescribed religious rituals.
4. Acquiring this knowledge necessitates a transformation of the self along a "staged progress ('way') to God that requires meeting certain conditions ('stations') and experiencing certain psychological phenomena ('states')."[59] The ultimate stage of this transformation is "an intensified personal experience of God,"[60] or "experiencing the destruction (*fana*) of the lower-self (*nafs*) that leads to the survival (*baqa*) of the higher-self (*ruh*)."[61]
5. This transformation is typically sought "collectively by like-minded individuals within the framework of … 'spiritual brotherhoods' (*tariqa*) and their lodges (*zawiya*/*ribat*/*khaneqah*)."[62]
6. Aspirants (sg. *murīd*) seek this transformation through the teaching of a master (*šayḫ*, *muršid*, *pīr*), to whom they announce a pledge of allegiance (*bay'a*).[63] The mutual obligations of master and aspirant form strong, enduring community bonds across time and place.[64]
7. Sufi masters are recognized as possessing "God-given, salvific knowledge and experience" (*ma'rifa*, *'irfān*). This knowledge transcends and is to be contrasted with knowledge acquired through reason.[65]

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56 Knysh, 60.

57 Green, *Sufism*, 9.

58 Sviri, "Sufism," 20.

59 Knysh, *Sufism*, 60.

60 Sviri, "Sufism," 20.

61 Green, *Sufism*, 9. Ebstein stresses that the path to proximity to God may, rather than necessarily, end in union; Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, 24. Karamustafa, remarking on the lack of consensus on the culmination of the Sufi journey, observes that "while some … described the highest stage of intimacy with God as the dissolution of all self-consciousness, others … viewed the ultimate goal as a 'reconstituted' self, a human identity recomposed in the image of God after being thoroughly deconstructed during the Sufi journey;" Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 19–20.

62 Knysh, *Sufism*, 60. See also Sviri, "Sufism," 20.

63 Knysh, *Sufism*, 60; Green, *Sufism*, 9; Sviri, "Sufism," 20.

64 Knysh, *Sufism*, 61; Green, *Sufism*, 9.

65 Ernst, *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism*, 28.

8. Some of these masters are capable of performing marvels (sg. *karāma*), granting blessings (*baraka*), and rise to the rank of "Friends of God" (*awliyā' allāh*).[66]

For Knysh, the collective presence of these elements constitutes Sufism and distinguishes Sufis from those Muslims who do not identify themselves as such; I should reiterate that Knysh emphasizes the incompleteness of the list. Yet, I believe it would be too demanding to require all of these elements to be found in the *Pointers and Reminders* in order to claim that Ibn Sīnā defended Sufism or theorized a Sufi philosophy in some capacity.

Certainly, Ibn Sīnā accepted the reality of "supersensory," "revelatory" knowledge (number one above). All intelligibles (*maʿqūlāt*) are supersensory insofar as they are immaterial and acquired by an incorporeal faculty—the intellect (*ʿaql*)—which is superior to the corporeal senses, even if certain corporeal faculties aid in translating revelation from intelligible concepts to allegories and metaphors accessible to the masses. Prophets receive revelation, according to Ibn Sīnā, through the "supersensory" intellectual faculty of Guessing Correctly (*ḥads*).[67] A question to answer will be how Ibn Sīnā explains the nature and acquisition of knowledge, particularly whether he claims that it can result from an "experience of God" which bypasses reason and the intellect (number seven above). Mukhtar Ali has argued that Sufism's "salient feature … is that witnessing and unveiling"—means of perception that eschew reason and the intellect—"is [*sic*] the only way for the human being to arrive at the truth."[68] Naturally, Ibn Sīnā would disagree with this; but, if he develops an alternative means to knowledge acquisition that does not involve the intellect, then this would be strong evidence that he developed a Sufi epistemology.[69]

We will find Ibn Sīnā's discussion of disciplining the body (*riyāḍa*, number three above) in *Pointers* IX (chapter 3 of this study). A noteworthy characteristic of this chapter is its title—"On the Stations of the Knowers" (*fī maqāmāt*

66 Knysh, *Sufism*, 61; Green, *Sufism*, 9.

67 On this, see Gutas, "Intuition and Thinking." For a recent study on Guessing Correctly and its reception, especially in the commentary tradition on the *Pointers*, see Adamson and Noble, "Intuition in the Avicennan Tradition."

68 Ali, *Philosophical Sufism*, 5.

69 In this sense, I maintain a distinction between Sufi and philosophical theories of knowledge. This is not the same as saying that the knowledge that certain Sufis claim to possess cannot be explained by means of philosophy. Damien Janos, for example, sees no essential distinction between mystical and philosophical knowledge in Rāzī, since "Rāzī defines mystical knowledge as a kind of intuitive intellectual knowledge acquired quasi-immediately or immediately. He does not oppose a 'philosophical' cognitive theory to a 'mystical' one;" Janos, "Intuition, Intellection, and Mystical Knowledge," 224.

al-ʿārifīn)—which refers to the stages through which the knower passes in his intellectual development. Many have seen similarities between what Ibn Sīnā says here and the element articulated in number four (stages and stations of transformation). *Pointers* IX, therefore, constitutes key evidence for those who see the *Pointers* as a Sufi text. If this is the case, then upon careful review of that chapter we should find that what Ibn Sīnā communicates via the metaphor of stations and stages is distinct from what he says in his non-Sufi works (none of which, to my knowledge, makes use of the stations and stages metaphor). Additionally, if we find that Ibn Sīnā's path along stations and stages culminates with the destruction or annihilation of the self (number four above), this alone may be sufficiently persuasive evidence to establish the *Pointers* as a Sufi text (and, as we shall see shortly, a mystical one, as well).

Ibn Sīnā's knowers are capable not only of acquiring knowledge that others cannot, they are also capable of performing feats that others cannot (number 8 above). These feats he calls miracles (*muʿjizāt*) and marvels (*karāmāt*). In *Pointers* X, he attributes the former to prophets and the latter to knowers and "Friends of God" (*awliyāʾ allāh*). Kugle considers the Friend (*walī*, also called "saint") as paradigmatic of Sufi communities and exclusively emerging therefrom.[70] He goes so far as to define Sufis as "those who self-consciously participate in the social manifestation of sainthood [*walāya*] in an Islamic society."[71] Here, then, we have another excellent candidate for evidence in favor of Ibn Sīnā's Sufism. As is the case with *Pointers* IX, what Ibn Sīnā says about miracles, marvels, and Friends of God in *Pointers* X will need to stand out from how he treats these concepts elsewhere in his corpus. Is he, in other words, appropriating a Sufi term and naturalizing it into his philosophy, or revealing a Sufi inclination that sets the *Pointers* apart from his other works?

To recapitulate: For the *Pointers and Reminders* to be considered a Sufi text, we will need to find therein elements central to Sufism elaborated in a manner concordant with Sufism. Of the eight concepts in the list above, five are most relevant to this investigation: first and foremost, 1) knowledge can be acquired through direct experience of God. The remainder depend on this first one: 1.1) acquisition of this knowledge does not rely upon reason or intellect, 1.2) this knowledge can be transmitted by means of meditation and bodily discipline, 1.3) this knowledge is acquired through progressing along stages of increasing

70 Kugle, *Rebel*, 32.

71 Kugle, 34. On Kugle's preference for translating *walī* (and related terms) as "saint" over "Friend," see 31–32.

closeness to God, culminating in the destruction of the self; and 1.4) possessors of this knowledge are uniquely capable of performing marvels.[72]

1.1.2 Mysticism

Along with considering whether the *Pointers* is a Sufi text, we must simultaneously consider whether it is a mystical text. A number of concepts, several of which are familiar from discussions of Sufism, regularly appear in discussions of mysticism as it pertains to Arabic and Islamic philosophy and beyond:

1. emanation and the descent and eventual return of the soul to its celestial origin;
2. the soul's metaphorical imprisonment in and rejection of the body;
3. asceticism and a rejection of worldly pleasures;
4. esotericism, in the sense that reality is divided into upper and lower realms, that knowledge of the upper realm is accessible only to the elite few, and that those few may also be able to perform miracles or marvels;
5. the acquisition of knowledge through non- or supra-rational means;
6. the knowledge acquired in 5 is also non- or supra-rational;
7. union of the self with the divine, or minimally a desire for union;[73]
8. an affective response to that union, characterized as ecstasy or joy; and
9. the ineffability of 7–8.

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72 Items number two (broad acceptance of the claim to supersensory knowledge), five (spiritual brotherhoods and lodges), and six (master-disciple relationship) in the above list are particular to Sufi social contexts. While they may have parallels in philosophy—e.g., the master-disciple relationship—they do not pertain to Ibn Sīnā and so I will not address them in this study.

73 In her summary of Blumenthal's intellectual mysticism, Lobel observes that the "divine is fundamentally intellect, and thus union with the divine can be described as connection, contact, or conjunction of human intellect with divine intellect." She later notes that the word used to express this union/connection/contact/conjunction is *ittiṣāl*; Lobel, *A Sufi-Jewish Dialogue*, 22. While such a capacious understanding of *ittiṣāl* would bring Ibn Sīnā into the mystical fold, it does not stand up to conceptual or philological scrutiny, at least in the specific Avicennan context. While conjunction and connection may be synonymous with union, contact is not; it means "the state or condition of touching;" s.v. "connection," "conjunction," and "contact," *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (accessed 24 March 2022). The metaphor of touch is precisely how the Arabic translation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics Lambda* renders Aristotle's description of thinking as "coming into contact" with the object of thought: *yulāmisuhu*. In his commentary on *Metaphysics Lambda*, Ibn Sīnā paraphrases Aristotle, saying, "When the substance of the intellect acquires the intelligible, it becomes intelligible in that moment just as if it touches it, for example." Ibn Sīnā's use of *ittiṣāl*, then, should not be understood as "union" or anything synonymous with union, but as contact. For the quote, and more on Ibn Sīnā and *ittiṣāl*, see Rapoport, "Sufi Vocabulary, but Avicennan Philosophy," 176–186 (quote on 185).

Another question that will require answering, then, is whether the presence of any, or all, of these elements in the *Pointers* necessitates calling it a mystical text and calling Ibn Sīnā's philosophy mystical. The seventh element in the list is, arguably, the sine qua non of mysticism and one of the most debated concepts when it comes to the issue of Ibn Sīnā's mysticism.[74] The mystical union, along with a non- or supra-rational epistemology,[75] serves as a bridge connecting conceptions of mysticism to Sufism (see numbers four and seven in the Sufism list above) and Neoplatonism.[76]

In defining mysticism, Pierre Hadot borrows André Lalande's definition, which prioritizes union while incorporating supra-rational epistemology: "Belief in the possibility of an intimate and direct union of the human spirit with the fundamental principle of being, a union constituting at one and the same time a mode of existence and a mode of knowledge foreign and superior to normal existence and knowledge."[77] This union, Hadot stresses in regard to Plotinus, is not just theoretical, but an ontological transformation.[78] Nevertheless, the soul does not fully coincide with Lalande's the One, which Hadot emphasizes would be impossible.[79] The proper way to understand Plotinian

74 Gwenaëlle Aubry observes, for example, that union with the divine became the prevalent concept of Neoplatonic mysticism; Aubry, "Plato, Plotinus, and Neoplatonism," 39.

75 Adamson and Noble prioritize this concept in a recent, provisional definition of mysticism: "the recognition of forms of cognition that lie beyond rationality;" Adamson and Noble, "Intuition in the Avicennan Tradition," 1.

76 For example, John Bussanich, in reference to Plotinus, observes that "the soul's innate love" for the Good facilitates its mystical ascent toward ultimate union with it; Bussanich, "Plotinus's Metaphysics of the One," 55–57, quote on 56. Elsewhere, Bussanich argues against "focusing excessively" on union with the one: "If only union with the One is considered truly mystical and supra-rational, then every level of awareness and activity below that hyper-ontic level seems suddenly more human, common, and more accessible;" and "We should not restrict the 'mystical' to rare, intense, non-cognitive experiences; instead, we need a more complete conception of mysticism that includes all aspects of the ascent over the full course of a human life;" Bussanich, "Mystical Elements," 5305 and 5309. On Plotinus's mystical union, see also Armstrong, *Architecture*, 44–47.

77 Hadot adds that speaking of "unity" instead of "union" better captures the immediacy of the mystical experience, and that a definition of mysticism must also include the affective component. Hadot, "Niveaux," 243. Lalande's definition appears in *Vocabulaire*, 1:496. Elsewhere, Hadot refers to Lloyd Gerson's definition: "an experiential knowledge of God which is realized through an embrace of unitive love;" Hadot, "L'Union," 3.

78 Hadot, "L'Union," 7.

79 Hadot, 27. It seems difficult to harmonize this insistence with Hadot's early assertion that the union is an ontological transformation. Luc Brisson, contending that a Plotinian union of the soul with the One involves the soul's loss of individuality and personality, criticizes Hadot's characterization of Plotinus's union as "mystical." He argues that such an appellation is anachronistic and that the term is too overtly associated with Christianity; Brisson,

mystical union, according to John Rist, is as a "theistic" union with God. In this case, one temporarily loses awareness of oneself but does not lose one's existential reality. It involves the soul's becoming identical with it its source "as far as possible," but never amounts to complete identity with God.[80] The union results in a drunkenness, deliriousness, ecstasy, and/or a loving joy (number eight above).[81] The unitive experience, and its affective response, are unique and, therefore, superior to reason and expression.[82] As Rist puts it, "If reality could be fully expressed, there would be no 'mysticism' at all."[83]

Intrinsic to the union is what I refer to in this study as a non-standard epistemology, or a non- or supra-rational means of knowledge (numbers five and six above): knowledge that is not grounded in logic; that transcends, rises above, or bypasses the normal use of reason and intellect, either in its means of acquisition or in its structure, or both. In the former, the intellect would not be involved in acquiring said knowledge. In the latter, the knowledge would not have a syllogistic structure, capable of being expressed in the form of premises with middle terms yielding conclusions; as a consequence, the intellect would not be involved in processing and understanding that knowledge.[84]

In his entry on mysticism in Arabic and Islamic philosophy in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Mehdi Aminrazavi observes that scholars fall into two general camps when it comes to Ibn Sīnā and mysticism: one sees him as a rationalist and denies that he developed a mystical philosophy, while the other argues that he turned toward mysticism later in life, pointing to his later works as evidence. Elsewhere, he places himself in the camp of scholars who see Ibn Sīnā "becoming increasingly more esoteric" in his later works.[85] Aminrazavi does not state explicitly what is mystical about his later works, but

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"Peut-on qualifier de 'mystique.'" For a critical response to Brisson, and defense of Hadot, see Chase, "Existe-t-il une mystique néoplatonicienne?"; and Aubry, "Plato, Plotinus, and Neoplatonism," 45.

80 Rist, "Back to the Mysticism of Plotinus," 184, 187, 197. Rist contrasts his "theistic" union with a "monistic" one, which involves becoming identical with God. See also his *Plotinus: The Road to Reality*, 213–230.

81 Hadot, "L'Union," 22, 26.

82 Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, 232.

83 Rist, "Back to the Mysticism of Plotinus," 188.

84 For Aubry, Plotinus's mystical experience can rightly be called mystical in part because the knowledge acquired therefrom has no propositional content; "Plato, Plotinus, and Neoplatonism," 44. In other words, it cannot be expressed via a syllogism.

85 Aminrazavi, "Discourse," 373. Among Ibn Sīnā's later, allegedly mystical works, Aminrazavi includes "his treatise *The Stations of the Gnostics* (*Maqāmāt al-ʿārifīn*)," by which he means *Pointers* IX; this is, of course, not an independent treatise.

intimates that Ibn Sīnā's mysticism is tied up with his Neoplatonist emanationism (number one above).[86] When speaking more broadly, however, Aminrazavi regularly mentions the following as mystical elements of Arabic philosophy: emanation from the One, asceticism (number three above), the metaphor of soul imprisoned in the body (number two above), the return of the soul to its place of origin in the higher realm, the soul's union with God, and non-rational, intuitive knowledge.[87]

For Parviz Morewedge, Ibn Sīnā is "an adequate representative of a mainstream of Islamic mysticism." He points to Ibn Sīnā's doctrine of emanation and the soul's return to its origin, his allusion to Sufi states and stations in the *Pointers*, his elaboration of love in the *Epistle on Love*, and his (alleged) doctrine of the soul's union with the divine as evidence of Ibn Sīnā's "interest in the mystical dimensions of philosophical thought."[88] While Morewedge may here only speak of "interest" in mysticism—a far cry from attributing mysticism to Ibn Sīnā—in the same study he later refers to Ibn Sīnā's "mystical texts," the "mystical section" of the *Pointers*, and the "Ibn Sinian notion of mystical union."[89] Morewedge has elsewhere described mystical union as the "cornerstone of [Ibn Sīnā's] philosophical system," representing "the highest aim of persons" and the "ultimate state of man's happiness."[90] The union of the soul with the divine is, for Morewedge, intimately correlated with the emanationist system that begins with the soul's descent away from its origin and concludes with the soul's ascent or return.[91] Of all potential elements of a mystical philosophy, he repeatedly stresses the Avicennan role of the mystical union. Clearly, this is the supreme element for Morewedge.[92]

If, indeed, it is the case that Ibn Sīnā's philosophy—either as a whole, or in some subset of his corpus—allows for the human soul to unite with the divine, then his philosophy would rightly be called mystical; if it does not, then the case for the mystical element of Ibn Sīnā's philosophy weakens drastically. The

86 Elsewhere, he asserts that Ibn Sīnā's Neoplatonism "paves the way for the rise of a more gnostic view of the soul;" Aminrazavi, 373.

87 Aminrazavi, "Mysticism in Arabic and Islamic Philosophy," Spring 2021.

88 Morewedge, "Neoplatonic Structure," 52.

89 Morewedge, 62.

90 Morewedge, "Contemporary Scholarship on Near Eastern Philosophy," 124 (highest aim), 133 (ultimate stage), 134 (corner-stone). See also Morewedge, "Critical Observations on Some Philosophies of Mysticism," 419.

91 Morewedge, "The Logic of Emanationism and Ṣūfism, Part II," 9.

92 Although Morewedge claims to find assertions of the ultimate mystical union in several of Ibn Sīnā's texts, he typically cites *Philosophy* (esp. § 37 of the metaphysics) and the last three chapters of the *Pointers*.

question of the human soul's union with the divine, then, will be a primary concern of this study. Alongside union with the divine, the next most consequential element for assessing whether Ibn Sīnā's philosophy is mystical is the presence of a non-standard epistemology. If Ibn Sīnā develops in the *Pointers* a non-standard epistemology—one that allows for non- or supra-rational acquisition of knowledge, or knowledge with a non- or supra-rational form—then the *Pointers* would rightfully be characterized as a mystical text.

I prioritize these two elements—the soul's union with the divine and non- or supra-rational epistemology—because they are at the heart of the scholarly debate about mysticism and Ibn Sīnā.[93] If either or both are present in the *Pointers*, then it would be pointless to deny that Ibn Sīnā elaborates a mystical philosophy in the *Pointers*. On the other hand, scholars widely—perhaps unanimously—agree that Ibn Sīnā's cosmology is emanationist and informed by Neoplatonism.[94] Ibn Sīnā often wrote of the afterlife as the soul's "return" (*al-maʿād*) to its origin, which I will address in chapter 2 (on *Pointers* VIII).

Ibn Sīnā was also very much an esotericist (number four above), depending on how we understand the term. Here I am modifying Michael Ebstein's elaboration of three aspects of esotericism: what he calls the 1) Ontological,

93 One may object to the extent to which I am prioritizing a personal experience of the divine and a non- or supra-rational epistemology as exemplary of mysticism. Omid Safi, for example, excoriates the "post-Enlightenment, Protestant worldview in which the realms of 'religion' and 'mysticism' have been privatized and defined in opposition to 'rational philosophy,'" and which privileges the "'quest of a personal experience of God' over their [Sufis'] larger social and institutional roles." This "facile division," as he calls it, of non- or supra-rational mysticism, on the one hand, and rational philosophy, on the other, would be "incomprehensible to a pre-modern Muslim mystic." He ultimately concludes that the category of "mysticism" should be broadened in order to be applicable to Sufism; the broadening should include attention to the social and political roles of Sufis; Safi, "Bargaining with Baraka," 260, 261, 281. Safi is correct, of course, to affirm the significance of Sufis' socio-political activities, and to question the inherent mutual exclusion posited between philosophy and mysticism. I do not think anyone would deny, for example, that Plotinus was both a philosopher and a mystic. Safi's essay, however, may illustrate the pitfalls of insisting on equating mysticism and Sufism. The difficulties that he highlights would subside by acknowledging that mysticism and Sufism—and philosophy, for that matter—are distinct phenomena that nonetheless may have overlapping components.

94 Dag Hasse, however, calls upon scholars to reconsider "the extent to which Avicenna's philosophy can be called Neoplatonic," since "Avicenna could have designed an epistemology that did not involve the active intellect" and therefore would not have included the emanation of intelligibles from the supernal realm to the human intellect; Hasse, "Avicenna's Epistemological Optimism," 111–112.

2) Epistemological-Hermeneutical, and 3) Occult.[95] The Ontological aspect involves the division of reality into two realms: the upper, celestial, supernal realm, and the lower, terrestrial, sublunar realm. The supernal realm is home to the immaterial intelligibles (*al-maʿqūlāt*), while the sublunar realm is home to the material *sensibilia* (*al-maḥsūsāt*). The Epistemological-Hermeneutical aspect proposes that only a select subset of humanity has the intellectual capability to acquire knowledge from the supernal realm. This knowledge, in its entirety equivalent to all of philosophy and science, should be kept from those unable to understand it. Given the wide spectrum of human intellectual capacity, what is esoteric for some is exoteric for others.[96] In a similar vein, the Occult aspect entails the ability for some to perform uncommon feats that may be characterized as magical, miraculous, or marvelous. These include, but are not limited to, summoning weather events, healing the ill, sickening the healthy, and prognostication.

Each of these aspects applies to Ibn Sīnā. There is no debate that he viewed reality as consisting of supernal and sublunar realms. This is central to his emanationist cosmology. At times, he uses Qurʾānic vocabulary—e.g., Dominion (*al-jabarūt*), Sovereignty (*al-malakūt*) and Unseen (*al-ġayb*)—to refer to the celestial realm (see chapters 3–4). Ibn Sīnā devotes the entirety of *Pointers* X to providing a scientific explanation of what today we might call occult phenomena (see chapter 4). And he firmly believed that philosophical knowledge is something intended for, or accessible to, a select few. His esotericism, in this latter sense, may be better characterized as his elitism. Ibn Sīnā's philosophical elitism is widely known and not unique to him.[97] To reveal philosophical truths to the masses, who are incapable of understanding them, may lead to utter confusion, dissension, and abnegation of one's religious duties.[98] This is why prophets communicate revelation to the masses by means of allegory, images, and symbols.[99] In this regard, the *Pointers* is an esoteric text, as Ibn Sīnā admonishes the reader of the *Pointers* not to share the text with those for whom it was not intended:

95 Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, 27.

96 Here I am paraphrasing Blumenthal, "Maimonides' Philosophic Mysticism," VIII.

97 Fārābī, for example, explained that Aristotle used an obscure means of expression in order to "avoid lavishing philosophy on all people but only on those who are worthy of it;" trans. in Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 258.

98 For more on this and how it relates to Ibn Sīnā's principles for interpreting the Qurʾān, see Sebti, *Avicenne*, 137–159.

99 Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 335–346.

Prologue to *Pointers* Book II

These are pointers to fundamental principles and reminders of essential elements [of philosophy]. Whoever finds them easy will be able to gain insights through them, while he who finds them difficult will not benefit even from the most obvious of them. We rely on God for success. Here I repeat my admonition and restate my request that the contents of these parts be withheld as much as possible from those who do not meet the conditions I stipulate at the end of these *Pointers*.[100]

هذه إشارات إلى أصول وتنبيهات على جمل يستبصر بها مَن تيسّر له ولا ينتفع بالأصرح منها من تعسّر عليه والتكلان على التوفيق وأنا أعيد وصيّتي وأكرّر التماسي أن يضنّ بما تشتمل عليه هذه الأجزاء كلّ الضنّ على من لا يوجد فيه ما أسترطه في آخر هذه الإشارات

Epilogue to the *Pointers*

Brother! In these *Pointers*, I have churned the cream of the truth for you. And I have fed you, bit by bit, the choicest parts of wisdom in the subtlest words. Protect it from those who would hackney it, from the ignoramuses, and from whomever has not been granted a brilliant perspicacity, training, and practice, whose inclination is with the riffraff; or whom is among the deviant and foolish of the wannabe philosophers. If you find somebody whose heart you trust to be pure, his way of life straight, who abstains from the sudden insinuations of the Whisperer, and who directs his attention to the truth readily and sincerely, then answer his question in degrees, in fragments, in installments, so that you can detect from what you just said what to say next. Bind him with inviolable oaths to God to follow your path in what you gave him, finding solace in you. If you publicize or squander this knowledge, then God [will judge] between us. "God suffices for a guardian."[101]

أيّها الأخ إنّي قد مخضت لك في هذه الإشارات عن زبدة الحقّ وألقمتك قفيّ الحِكَم في لطائف الكلم فصُنْه عن المبتذلين والجاهلين ومن لم يرزق الفطنة الوقّادة والدربة والعادة وكان صغاه مع الغاغة أو كان من ملحدة هؤلاء المتفلسفة ومن همجهم فإن وجدت من تثق بنقاء سريرته واستقامة سيرته وبتوقّفه عمّا يتسرّع إليه الوسواس وبنظره إلى الحقّ بعين الرضا والصدق فآته ما يسألك منه مدرّجاً مجزّءاً مفرّقاً تستفرس ممّا تسلفه لما تستقبله وعاهده بالله وبأيمان لا مخارج لها ليجرى فيما تؤتيه مجراك متأسّياً بك فإن أذعت هذا العلم وأضعته فالله بيني وبينك وكفى بالله وكيلاً

100 *al-Išārāt*, 185.3–6.; trans. mod. from Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 48.

101 *al-Išārāt*, 392.1–4; I have relied on the partial trans. in Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian*

Perspicacity/sagacity (*faṭāna*, *fiṭna*) features prominently in the epilogue, and implicitly in the prologue. The *Pointers* is not a text that any dilettante or "wannabe philosopher" can pick up, study, and benefit from. It is for this reason that Ibn Sīnā calls for the *Pointers* to be withheld from those who are not worthy of studying it, those who will misinterpret it and express its subtleties in a vulgar and corrupt way. While there may be an affinity for Ontological, Hermeneutical, and Occult esotericism between Ibn Sīnā, mystics, and Sufis—and, for that matter, Neoplatonists and Ismāʿīlīs[102]—this affinity does not necessarily impart to Ibn Sīnā's philosophy a mystical (or Sufi) character. It does, however, reflect a shared intellectual milieu.

Ibn Sīnā also regularly denigrated the body as impeding the soul's pursuit of its main function and perfection (number two above). While he does not forthrightly advocate asceticism and the rejection of worldly pleasures—he was, as Jon McGinnis puts it, "a bon vivant, enjoying all the pleasures that life has to offer whether intellectual or physical"[103]—he does elaborate a hierarchy of goods, perfections, and pleasures which places corporeal pleasures far below intellectual pleasures. In fact, he argues that only after the soul separates from the body upon the body's death can it fully dedicate itself to intellection, and fully experience the pleasure associated with it.

Since there is widespread consensus about Ibn Sīnā's emanationism, esotericism (narrowly defined as elitism), asceticism and rejection of the body (also narrowly defined), they have little impact on the debate at hand; this applies to both the question of mysticism and that of Sufism, since esotericism, asceticism, and rejection of the body pertain to both. If, alone or collectively, they are sufficient for some to say that Ibn Sīnā's philosophy is mystical or Sufi, then nothing I say in what follows will make much of a difference to them. If that is the case, however, then I would implore such scholars to clarify precisely what they mean when referring to Ibn Sīnā's mysticism or Sufism.

Tradition, 48–49. The final quote, *fa-kafā bi-llāhi wakīlan*, appears in Q 4:81, 4:132, 4:171, 33:3, and 33:48; cf. *wa-kafā bi-rabbika wakīlan* in Q 17:65. Janssens observes a similarity between Ibn Sīnā's attitude toward revealing the truth to the masses and the attitude expressed by Ġazālī in the "Marvels of the Heart" (*ʿajāʾib al-qalb*) book of the *Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*); "Al-Ghazālī between Philosophy (*Falsafa*) and Sufism (*Taṣawwuf*)," 630.

102 Ibn Taymiyya lumped Ibn Sīnā and the Brethren of Purity (*iḫwān al-ṣafāʾ*) together in this regard; Michot, "Misled and Misleading," 157.

103 McGinnis, *Avicenna*, 25. Joep Lameer argues that the famous explanation of Ibn Sīnā's death, namely as a consequence of his sexual activities, is a forgery most likely perpetrated by his opponents in the early twelfth century CE; "Avicenna's Concupiscence."

To recapitulate: For the *Pointers and Reminders* to be considered a mystical text, we will need to find fundamental aspects of mysticism expressed therein. Of the nine concepts in the list above, two are most germane: first and foremost (again), 1) the human soul can experience union with the divine. The second is the presence of a non-standard epistemology, which has two aspects: 2.1) knowledge can be acquired through non- or supra-rational means, and 2.2) that knowledge cannot be expressed logically via syllogisms.[104]

1.2 *A Terminological Clarification*

The lack of a clear conceptualization of Ibn Sīnā's mysticism and/or Sufism presents a challenge to analyzing scholarship on this topic and locating mysticism/Sufism in his corpus.[105] At times, scholars declare works like the final three chapters of the *Pointers* to portray Ibn Sīnā's mysticism; at other times, his esotericism; at other times, his gnosticism; and at yet other times, his Sufism. Further muddying the water, one may come across any combination of these terms. More often than not, scholars leave them undefined, assuming a common understanding of them.[106] Precious few times do scholars explicitly state what they mean when they assign the labels mystical, esoteric, gnostic, and/or Sufi to the *Pointers*. I should clarify, then, what I mean when I use terms like mysticism, Sufism, esotericism, and gnosticism in this study. I will refrain from the terms gnostic/ism, which often appear as translations of *ʿārif* and *maʿrifa*/*ʿirfān*, respectively. As Kevin van Bladel argues, there is "justifiable scholarly skepticism over the modern category of ancient gnosticism." In relation to Sufis and Sufism, he adds, translating *ʿārif* and *maʿrifa*/*ʿirfān* as "gnostic" and "gnosticism" only furthers this "unproven connection."[107] I will also abstain from using esoteric/ism, given their association with gnosis,[108] their common

104 I have not addressed elements eight (affective response to union with the divine) and nine (ineffability of union and its affective response) as they are subordinate to union with the divine. If there is no unity of the human soul with the divine, then any appearance of affective elements or ineffability in Ibn Sīnā's philosophy alone would not suffice to call it mysticism.

105 This is due at least in part to the fact that, to paraphrase Rosenthal, pre-modern Muslim societies feature no direct counterpart to the modern concept of mysticism; Rosenthal, "Ibn ʿArabī between 'Philosophy' and 'Mysticism,'" 1.

106 As Ernst has commented with regard to mysticism—a comment I believe applies also to esotericism, gnosticism, and Sufism—, the term "itself is subject to debate and confusion;" Ernst, *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism*, xvii. One should not assume a common understanding of these terms and therefore leave them undefined.

107 van Bladel, "Gnosticism."

108 Ali, for example, explains *maʿrifa* and *ʿirfān* as "esoteric knowledge or gnosis of God;" *Philosophical Sufism*, 319.

use in the sense of an inner (*bāṭin*) versus outer (*ẓāhir*, exoteric) meaning of a text, especially the Qur'ān, and their particular association with Sufis and Ismā'īlīs. I have not come across a scholar describing Ibn Sīnā's philosophy, or the *Pointers*, as esoteric in the narrow sense of something intended for, or accessible to, a select elite with specialized knowledge or abilities.

That leaves mysticism and Sufism. Regarding mysticism, I have in mind only the two elements enumerated above about which scholars disagree: 1) whether Ibn Sīnā allows for union of the human soul with the divine, and 2) whether he maintained a non- or supra-rational epistemology. Both of these elements also apply to Sufism. Regarding Sufism, we can add three elements that are subordinate to the points above: 3) knowledge can be acquired through direct experience with God, 4) this knowledge is acquired through progressing along stages of increasing closeness to God (culminating in the first point above), and 5) some possessors of this knowledge, called Friends of God, are capable of performing marvels. If one or all of elements 3–5 are present, but have explanations other than elements 1 and 2, they will not suffice to categorize the *Pointers* as a Sufi text.

I should also emphasize a key matter of nuance in how I and others discuss Ibn Sīnā and his relationship to mysticism and Sufism. There is an important distinction between asserting, 1) that Ibn Sīnā at times "explains" or "discusses" aspects of Sufism, or that he maintained an "interest" in mysticism, and 2) that he "adopted," "developed," "defended," "theorized," or "elaborated" a Sufi/mystical philosophy.[109] I see nothing inaccurate with the former,[110] and will in fact argue that what he does in the *Pointers* (and other texts) is precisely to explain scientifically the phenomena that others provide non-scientific explanations for. It is the latter,[111] however, with which I disagree. I will argue that there is no evidence in the *Pointers* (or elsewhere in his corpus) that Ibn Sīnā incorporates union of the soul with the divine or a non-standard epistemology into his philosophical system.

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109 These are examples, of course. This list is not comprehensive but representative.

110 As a recent example, Mohammed Rustom observes that Ibn Sīnā "wrote favorably about mysticism;" "Philosophical Sufism," 399. It is questionable, however, that he in fact held a favorable opinion of Sufis (as we will see later in this book).

111 As a recent example, Ali asserts that Ibn Sīnā is a "clear example" of a philosopher who accepted an esoteric, mystical "unveiling as a means of arriving at truth." To support this, he refers to the ninth chapter of *Pointers and Reminders*, wherein Ibn Sīnā "skillfully discusses the stations of the Sufis and describes various modalities of perception and types of esoteric knowledge;" Ali, *Philosophical Sufism*, 4. To say that Ibn Sīnā was merely discussing Sufi doctrine or practices would be correct. That he accepted an alternative, supra-rational epistemology, however, I will argue is not supported by the evidence.

2 Metaphysics of the Rational Soul

Should we peer beneath the surface of Ibn Sīnā's use of Sufi terminology in the final chapters of the *Pointers*, as well as step back to view those chapters in broader context—both within the book and within Ibn Sīnā's corpus—we will find that it is not mysticism or Sufism that runs through these chapters, binding them together as glue. Rather, it is Ibn Sīnā's "singular preoccupation with the subject of the survival and fate of the rational soul."[112] The human rational soul (*al-nafs al-insāniyya, al-nafs al-nāṭiqa*) distinguishes us from other living beings, who, like us, have vegetative (*al-nafs al-nabātiyya*) and animal souls (*al-nafs al-ḥayawāniyya*). According to Ibn Sīnā, the rational soul has two functions, as if it had two "faces":[113] one theoretical, and one practical. The theoretical function, performed by the theoretical intellect (*al-ʿaql al-naẓarī*), is to contemplate universal intelligibles (*maʿqūlāt*). The practical function, performed by the practical intellect (*al-ʿaql al-ʿamalī*), then makes reasoned decisions, based on the theoretical intellect's contemplation, in managing the body with which it is associated.[114] The rational soul, therefore, is the lynchpin connecting theoretical philosophy (logic, natural philosophy, metaphysics), practical philosophy (ethics, politics) and medicine.

Naturally, then, Ibn Sīnā pursued his preoccupation with the rational soul across several philosophical disciplines, as well as in other disciplines not typically associated with philosophy, including religious law and rituals, prophecy, revelation, and miracles. He treats these latter subjects, however, with all the intellectual rigor typical of philosophical inquiry, fully harmonizing them—as we will see later in this book—within his scientific system.

Ibn Sīnā was famously dissatisfied with and confused by the treatment of metaphysics in the Arabic philosophical tradition as being limited to theology. While Fārābī's *On the Purposes of the Metaphysics* may have confirmed for Ibn Sīnā that metaphysics is broader than theology, encompassing also the study of being-as-such and first philosophy, his dissatisfaction remained. Eventually, Ibn Sīnā added a fourth subdivision to metaphysics, which focuses on the

112 Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 288. What follows is deeply indebted to Gutas's elucidation and naming of Ibn Sīnā's "Metaphysics of the Rational Soul;" Gutas, 270–296, esp. 288–296. See also Gutas, "Avicenna: The Metaphysics of the Rational Soul," 2012.

113 Ibn Sīnā discusses the theoretical and practical aspects of the intellect in *Avicenna's De Anima*, 1.5, 45–51. On the soul as having two faces, see De Smet, "La doctrine."

114 For more on these two activities of the soul, see Sebti, "Distinction"; and Lizzini, "Vie active."

rational soul and its ultimate destination. This new dimension is what Gutas first called Metaphysics of the Rational Soul. Ibn Sīnā lists a number of subjects that fall under the rubric of the Metaphysics of the Rational Soul. These include: the rational soul and its existence in, and separation from, bodies; providence, divine governance, and the order of the universe; the nature of real pleasure and pain; reward and punishment for the virtuous and evildoers; and prophetic revelation.[115]

This study is the first to read chapters VII–X of the *Pointers* from the perspective of the Metaphysics of the Rational Soul. As such, it departs from the tradition of bundling *Pointers* VII along with *Pointers* I–VI as the "Physics and Metaphysics" of the *Pointers*, and chapters VIII–X as its Sufism. When reading *Pointers* VIII, it is readily apparent that it is intimately connected with the preceding chapter. The sections of *Pointers* VIII addressing the fate of virtuous and evil souls in the afterlife are incomplete without having already read the end of *Pointers* VII on providence and the presence of good and evil in the universe. The end of *Pointers* VII, in turn, can only be properly understood after reading the preceding sections on the rational soul as intellect, God as intellect, and the nature of God's knowledge. The attention paid to the attainment of sensory and intellectual pleasure and perfection in *Pointers* VIII is a natural complement to the sections on the intellect and intellection that comprise the first two thirds of *Pointers* VII. These two chapters lead to a discussion of the human intellect, its relation to the active intellect, the role of prophecy and prophetic law in governance, and their purpose combined with religious rituals in maintaining social harmony in *Pointers* IX. Finally, the rational soul's role and its use of corporeal faculties in the performance of saintly marvels (*karāmāt*), prophetic miracles (*muʿjizāt*), and prophecy provide the content of *Pointers* X. These chapters seamlessly connect elements of natural philosophy (the soul, sensory faculties, and cognition), metaphysics (ontology, cosmology, the intellect and intelligibles), ethics, politics (governance and law), and religion (eschatology, law, revelation, prophecy, and miracles) to create a whole greater than its parts: the Metaphysics of the Rational Soul. This book will demonstrate that *Pointers* VII–X reproduces what appears in sections of Ibn Sīnā's philosophical summae and independent monographs dedicated to the Metaphysics of the Rational Soul (see the appendices for illustrative charts).

115 I have paraphrased these subjects from Gutas's translation of Ibn Sīnā's *Compendium of the Soul*; Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 7, 290–291.

3 The Uniqueness of the *Pointers*

Many scholars have commented on what they take to be the original content and structure of at least certain parts of the *Pointers*. With regard to the chapters on natural philosophy (*Pointers* I–IV), McGinnis has persuasively documented the ways in which Ibn Sīnā deviates from the standard Aristotelian tradition of presenting the physical sciences. Though his article focuses on natural philosophy, McGinnis does make the more overarching observation that the *Pointers* "represents a complete reconceptualization of *all* of the sciences, whether the theoretical sciences, like physics and metaphysics, or the practical sciences, like ethics."[116] While McGinnis presents some examples of how the content of the *Pointers* differs from previous works in both the Aristotelian tradition and the Avicennan oeuvre, the purview of this particular comment is on the *Pointers*'s organizational structure and its rejection of the strict disciplinary boundaries dividing topics physical, metaphysical, theological, and ethical in traditionally Aristotelian works. This accurately captures Ibn Sīnā's inclusion of Metaphysics of the Rational Soul as the final division of the metaphysics of the *Pointers*. The *Pointers* represents Ibn Sīnā's clearest and fullest application of his new organization of the metaphysical sciences.

Even more so than the chapters on natural philosophy and metaphysics, *Pointers* VIII–X (excluding *Pointers* VII) have received attention for their supposed uniqueness. In the introduction to her translation of these chapters, Shams Inati asserts that while the content of *Pointers* VIII and X can largely be found in Ibn Sīnā's other works, the content of the ninth chapter is "on the whole original."[117] In his review of Inati's translation of these chapters, Hossein Ziai avers that "it is widely accepted that … the last part [of the *Pointers*] introduces subjects that had not been systematically nor extensively examined in *al-Shifāʾ*."[118] Corbin more broadly asserts that the final section of the *Pointers* "differs from the *Shifāʾ* [*Cure*] and from the *Kitāb al-Najāt* [*Salvation*]" because of its treatment of the mystical stations of the gnostics.[119] Sami Hawi even claims that "the treatment of mysticism in *Isharat* contains no representation of his philosophic system as a whole. Instead, some concepts of this system … are employed as points of reference for his study of mysticism."[120] This alleged difference has led some scholars to posit a dichotomy in Ibn Sīnā's

116 McGinnis, "Pointers, Guides, Founts and Gifts," 438; emphasis original.
117 Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 3.
118 Ziai, "Review of Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*," 203.
119 Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, 205.
120 Hawi, "Ibn Sina and Mysticism," 100.

corpus: the standard, Aristotelian/Peripatetic works, on the one side; on the other, his personal, mystical, Sufi, and/or Oriental works.[121] Inati's observation about the content of *Pointers* VIII and X is, in fact, correct, as the following chapters will show. But, we can say the same about *Pointers* VII and IX. This study will show that almost everything that Ibn Sīnā presents in *Pointers* VII–X—in terms of the topics studied, and how—can be found in texts that span the entirety of Ibn Sīnā's career. What is different about the *Pointers* is that Ibn Sīnā presents this material systematically as the Metaphysics of the Rational Soul.

4 Editions and Translations of the *Pointers and Reminders*

4.1 *Editions*

What lies beneath many assertions of originality is the assumption that these chapters portray the mystical or Sufi side of Ibn Sīnā's philosophy. Modern scholarship's treatment of *Pointers* VIII–X as representing Ibn Sīnā's mystical/Sufi thought began with Mehren's publication of them as one of Ibn Sīnā's allegedly mystical/Sufi treatises. In addition to Mehren's publication, there are three other editions of the *Pointers*: Jacques Forget's (d. 1933), published shortly after Mehren's; Sulaymān Dunyā's, first published in 1947–1948; and, most recently, Mujtabā Zāriʿī's (2002).[122]

The first modern, printed edition of at least part of the *Pointers* in Europe was prepared by the Dutch Orientalist August Ferdinand Mehren. In 1891, Brill published *Pointers* VIII–X as the second volume of his *Mystical Treatises of Avicenna*. The subheading of the volume indicates that these chapters are "On the Sufi Doctrine." Mehren reinforces the mystical/Sufi character of the text by announcing in the introduction that he presents this text to "lovers of the mystical philosophy of the Arabs."[123] He goes further in this regard by quoting Ṭūsī, himself quoting Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, averring that in these chapter Ibn Sīnā provided an unprecedented and yet unmatched exposition of Sufi doc-

121 Fakhry, "Three Varieties of Mysticism in Islam," 199. For additional references, see above, section 1.

122 There is, additionally, an uncritical, anonymous printing of the *Pointers* from Maṭbaʿat al-Ḥaydarī in Tehran, dated 1379 AH. The text is printed along with Ṭūsī's commentary and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī's (d. 766/1365) adjudicative supercommentary (*muḥākama*). This same text was reprinted in Qum by Našr al-Balāġa. They are, to my knowledge, not often cited. I will not address them here.

123 Mehren, *Traités Mystiques*, 1891, 2:5.

trine.[124] Describing the style of these chapters as concise while also bearing, at times, much repetition, Mehren announces that he preferred to paraphrase rather than provide a literal translation. In preparing the text, Mehren relied on two manuscripts: MS Leiden Or. 1020a and a manuscript held at the India Office Library; Lameer suggests this latter must be MS India Office, Delhi Arabic 1477/a.[125] Mehren says nothing of his editorial method. The text itself is presented in a manner similar to Forget's edition (see below). Given the paucity of manuscript witnesses, and their seemingly random selection, Lameer judges Mehren's edition as not even "an attempt at a definitive rendering" of *Pointers* VIII–X.[126] Given that Mehren also paraphrased the text, rather than translated, and that Forget also used the Leiden MS in his edition, there is little reason to consult his text.

Jacques Forget's edition was published by Brill in 1892.[127] He credits the decision to produce an edition of Ibn Sīnā's *Pointers and Reminders* to his friend and colleague at the Catholic University of Leuven, Désiré-Joseph Mercier, whom Forget refers to as "director of the St. Thomas Aquinas Institute" at the university.[128] Forget's edition, in order to "satisfy the demands of modern criticism," as he puts it, relies on no fewer than nine manuscripts, five of which are complete (alphabetical sigla are Forget's):[129]

1. A: MS Leiden 1020a. This manuscript contains only the final three chapters of Book II. Forget reports that, according to a note appended to the manuscript, the MS was purchased twenty years before Ibn Sīnā's death by a certain Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. There is ample reason to doubt this statement, given that Ibn Sīnā likely completed the *Pointers*

124 Mehren, 2:5. According to Rāzī, "This section is the most significant of what is in this book, for [in it] he [Ibn Sīnā] gives order to the knowledges of the Sufis in an unprecedented manner which has not been matched since" (*hāḏā l-bābu ajallu mā fī hāḏā l-kitābi fa-innahu rattaba ʿulūma l-ṣūfiyyati tartīban mā sabaqahu ilay-hi min qablihi wa-lā laḥiqahu min baʿdihi*); *Šarḥ*, 2:589.3–4. Some scholars have ascribed this judgment to Ṭūsī, but Ṭūsī was simply reporting what Rāzī had said (clearly marked by *wa-qad ḏakara l-fāḍilu l-šāriḥ*); Zargar, *Polished Mirror*, 17; Elamrani-Jamal, "Vision contemplative," 145; Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ*, 2:1015.

125 Lameer, "Towards a New Edition," 216.

126 Lameer, 217.

127 The edition was reprinted in 1999 by Goethe University Frankfurt's Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science (Institüt für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften). Lameer lamented the difficulty of finding Forget's edition, but PDF versions are now easily accessible online; Lameer, 217.

128 Forget, *Le livre des théorèmes*, vi. For more on Mercier and the chair of Thomistic Philosophy at KU Leuven, see van Riel, "The History of the Higher Institute of Philosophy."

129 Forget, *Le livre des théorèmes*, vi.

fewer than ten years before his death. Lameer provides several other reasons to suspect the dating, and suggests instead that it dates to 804/1401–1402.[130]

2. B: MS Berlin Oct. 27. Undated, though Forget suggests that, based on the handwriting, it is from the second half of the 6th/12th century. Lameer, pointing to information in Ahlwardt's catalogue, suggests that this manuscript dates to around the year 700/1300.[131] This MS is nearly complete (it is missing part of the ninth chapter of logic and the tenth),[132] though Forget remarks that it suffers from some copyist errors.
3. C: MS Leiden 1062. A complete manuscript the copying of which was finished, according to the colophon, in the afternoon of 25 Jumādā I 614 / 30 August 1217.[133] Forget remarks that the MS contains considerable lacunae and errors.
4. D: MS Berlin Wetzstein II 1242. A clean, presumably complete, copy. Forget claims that it was completed by Aḥmad b. al-Qālim b. Aḥmad on 3 Rabīʿ I 647 / 16 June 1249, but according to Ahlwardt, this copy was completed in 1100/1688 based on an exemplar that was copied in 647 AH.[134] The margins are full of comments from Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's commentary.
5. E: MS Leiden Golius 93. Completed by Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Ṣūfī in Rabīʿ II 719 / May or June 1319. This consists of only the metaphysics.[135]
6. F: MS Leiden 1064. A complete, clean copy which dates to 5 Ḏū l-Qaʿda 702 / 21 June 1303.
7. G: MS Berlin Petermann II 51. This is a copy of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's commentary (*šarḥ*) on Book II of the *Pointers*. It dates to 1056/1646–1647.[136] The text of the *Pointers* is fully reproduced therein.
8. H: MS Oxford Pococke 107. An incomplete copy which dates to 717/1317–1318.

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130 Lameer, "Towards a New Edition," 209–210.

131 Lameer, 211.

132 Lameer, 211.

133 I used the *hijrī*-Gregorian date converter at www.oxfordislamicstudies.com to arrive at the Gregorian-era dates.

134 Lameer, "Towards a New Edition," 211.

135 This MS is available in digital format as Or. 93 in Brill's Middle Eastern Manuscripts Online 1: Pioneer Orientalists online database; http://primarysources.brillonline.com/browse/memo-1-pioneer-orientalists/or-0093-alisharat-waltanbihat-fi-lmantiq-walhikma-ff-79;srg158 (accessed 4 May 2022).

136 Lameer lists the date as 1046 AH; "Towards a New Edition," 206.

9. K: MS Oxford Marsh 32. Complete but undated. Forget remarks that this MS is clearly related to MS Leiden 93 Golius, though it has additional variants not found therein. Forget only acquired this and MS H after he had completed the edition of Book I (on logic).

In terms of his editorial technique, Forget states that, all things being equal, he prefers the oldest reading. For him, that would mean MS Leiden 1020a, which claims to date from Ibn Sīnā's lifetime. He omits variants that are, in his words, "grammatically insignificant."[137] Otherwise, the apparatus provides minimal explanation for his editorial decisions or the variants provided. The edition itself is rather sparse. There is no index or glossary; it is accompanied only by a table of contents indicating the chapter (*nahj*, *namaṭ*) pages. Each chapter heading and title is center aligned, but new chapters do not start on a new page. The only page break between chapters occurs between the end of Book I and beginning of Book II. Forget does not organize the chapters of Book II into sections on physics, metaphysics, or Sufism. Each section within a chapter begins on a new line with a slight indent, and is identified by its classification (*išāra*, *tanbīh*, etc.) and title (when present), both of which are overlined but not numbered. Finding a specific section can be laborious. Due to the opacity of Forget's technique, the fact that he often strays, without explanation, from his stated preference for the oldest reading, and an insufficient number of witnesses for the entire text,[138] Lameer concludes that there are serious questions behind the reliability of Forget's text.[139]

Roughly a half century after Forget's edition was published, Sulaymān Dunyā's edition appeared in its first edition/printing. Whereas Forget included the entirety of the *Pointers* in a single volume, Dunyā divided it into multiple volumes. The first edition—published in Cairo in 1947–1948 by Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyya—consists of three volumes bound in one book: logic (dated 1947), physics (dated 1948), and metaphysics (undated, but presumably 1948). Of the three volumes, only the first has even a somewhat substantial introduction. The second volume contains no introduction, while the third begins with a few pages placing the *Pointers* in the context of Postclassical debates, especially regarding the (in)corporeal nature of resurrection.[140] The third volume

137 Forget, *Le livre des théorèmes*, ix.

138 Only *Pointers*, Book II, chapters VIII–X are supported by all nine witnesses that Forget included. *Pointers* Book II, Chapter VII, which is also a part of this study, had eight witnesses in Forget's edition; Lameer, "Towards a New Edition," 215.

139 Lameer, 213. Lameer mentions an Iranian edition of the *Pointers*, unused and largely unknown in the West, which takes the text of Forget's edition and compares it with another *Pointers* witness, MS Tehran University, Collection Miškāt 288; 218–220.

140 Dunyā (1948), *al-Išārāt*, 1948, 3:1–6.

also contains a few pages on Dunyā's sources, which included the following (sigla are Dunyā's):

1. *sīn*: MS Escorial 656, which dates to 724/1323–1324.[141]
2. *alif*: MS Cairo al-Azhar 10 specific (*ḫuṣūṣī*) / 18076 general (*ʿumūmī*). This undated witness lacks the logic and the final chapter (chapters?) of the metaphysics. It contains many valuable marginal comments.[142]
3. *bāʾ*: MS Cairo al-Azhar 646 specific (*ḫuṣūṣī*) / 34693 general (*ʿumūmī*). This complete MS, written in a poor hand (*ḫaṭṭ radīʾ*), dates to Jumādā II 1026/May–June 1617. It was misidentified in the library as *Manṭiq al-tahḏīb wa-l-išārāt*.
4. *ḥāʾ*: MS Cairo Dār al-Kutub al-Malakiyya Philosophy 847. This witness "has [all] three sections" (*bi-hā l-aqsāmu l-ṯalāṯatu*), is written in a good eastern hand, but is undated. The logic was errantly placed at the end of the work and is missing the beginning, and part of the metaphysics is lacking at the end.
5. *ṣād*: MS Cairo Dār al-Kutub al-Malakiyya 2352w (*al-ramz wāw*). A complete manuscript which dates to 29 Ḏū l-Ḥijja 1049/21 April 1640.
6. *ṭāʾ*: MS Cairo Dar al-Kutub al-Malakiyya Philosophy 8. A complete manuscript which dates to 993/1585.
7. *ʿayn*: MS Cairo Dār al-Kutub al-Malakiyya 2211w. In addition to the *Pointers*, this codex contains Aṯīr al-Dīn al-Abharī's (d. btw. 660–663/1263–1265) *Guidance* (*al-Hidāya*). The *Pointers* part is undated, but Dunyā suggests, based on similarities in handwriting and paper, that the *Pointers* and *Guidance* were copied at the same time. The *Guidance* is dated to 1289/1872–1873.
8. *lām*: Forget's printed edition.
9. *mīm*: "Cairo's well-known printed edition" (*maṭbūʿ al-qāhira wa-huwa maʿrūf mašhūr*).[143]

Having presented his sources, Dunyā then addresses a dilemma: how to indicate variant readings and provide explanatory commentary without overburdening the text? He announces that, contrary to his method for the volumes on logic and physics, in the volume on metaphysics he indicates all textual variants, regardless of whether they were merely copyist errors.[144] This implies

141 Dunyā does not mention the MS number, only that it comes from the Escorial. The MS number appears in Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 425.

142 The only Cairo MS that appears in Gutas's inventory of Ibn Sīnā's works is Cairo VI 93; Gutas, 425.

143 Dunyā (1948), *al-Išārāt*, 1948, 3:7–10.

144 3:10–11.

that the other two volumes are based on these same sources. He additionally provides his own commentary, which is informed by Ṭūsī's. Dunyā indicates variants by means of numbered footnotes; his own commentary is introduced with an underlined *šarḥ*. Unfortunately, he does not mention which (if any) manuscript he used as an exemplar, nor does he address his method in evaluating variants.

The first volume, containing the logic of the *Pointers*, includes a brief introduction which focuses mainly on the question of which Avicennan works are reliable sources for understanding his true beliefs. Dunyā recounts his dismay at learning—via the introduction to *Eastern Philosophy* (*al-ḥikma al-mašriqiyya*), as well as what others, like Ibn Ṭufayl, said about Ibn Sīnā's *Eastern Philosophy*—that the *Cure* and *Salvation* are merely encyclopedias of Peripatetic philosophy, not of Avicennan philosophy. Ibn Sīnā's true philosophy, according to Dunyā's understanding, is to be found in the unfortunately lost *Eastern Philosophy*, as well as in his *Pointers and Reminders*. He expressly rejects prior efforts by Orientalists to explain precisely what *al-mašriqiyya* means. Specifically, he dismisses Max Horten's argument that Ibn Sīnā's "Sufi *illuminationist* books"[145] contain his true, personal beliefs, which he concealed from others. In fact, Dunyā does not in this introduction associate the *Pointers* or *Eastern Philosophy* with Sufism or mysticism. He merely affirms the following convictions: the *Cure* is not completely consistent (*yusāyir tamāma l-musāyara*) with *Eastern Philosophy*, and the *Pointers* is a reliable source (*maṣdar ṣaḥīḥ*) for Ibn Sīnā's personal doctrines (*ārāʾ Ibn Sīnā wa-afkārahu l-ḫāṣṣa*), which he concealed from those who were not his intellectual peers.[146]

Beyond the introduction—and most pertinent to this study—, Dunyā similarly refrained from describing *Pointers* VIII–X as the Sufi chapters. In fact, *Pointers* VIII and X bear no commentary whatsoever, be it textual or doctrinal; *Pointers* IX features only a handful of lexicographical explanations. For the second edition, which appeared between 1960–1968 as volume 22 in Dār al-Maʿārif's (Cairo) *Ḏaḫāʾir al-ʿarab* series, Dunyā took a different approach.[147] This time, he divided the metaphysics into two volumes: volume three is labeled metaphysics (*Pointers* Book II, IV–VII) and volume four is labeled Sufism (Book II, VIII–X); a page bearing only the word *al-taṣawwuf* (Sufism) appears after the

145 This is the only instance in the introduction in which Dunyā vocalizes the *rasm* of *al-mšrqya*, clearly indicating the word should be read here as *al-mušriqiyya* and not *al-mašriqiyya*; Dunyā (1947), *al-Išārāt*, 1:18.16.

146 1:5–20.

147 The second edition was reissued in 1971. A third edition, also published by Dār al-Maʿārif, appeared between 1983–1994.

volume four title page and before the beginning of *Pointers* VIII. This change would prove influential: it is most certainly the reason why later scholars would refer to the "fourth part" of the *Pointers*.[148] Unfortunately, Dunyā offered no explanation for this change or rationale for this presentation. We cannot be sure whether he was following Mehren, some other precedent, or his own devising, when he separated *Pointers* VIII–X in its own volume with the heading "Sufism."[149] Another major change in the presentation of the text was Dunyā's decision to pair the text of the *Pointers* with the entirety of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's commentary, thereby replacing his own textual and doctrinal comments.

The first volume (on logic) of the second edition contains an extensive introduction which touches on questions mainly related to logic, but also on Ibn Sīnā's proofs for God's existence. It additionally has a brief section entitled "publishing texts" (*iḫrāj al-kutub*). One may expect here a methodological excursus on his editorial technique. Instead, one finds a criticism of the Orientalist insistence on the careful analysis of manuscript witnesses and the presentation of textual variants in a critical apparatus. While Dunyā felt that "purifying [texts] from corruption and distortion" (*taḫlīṣahā mina l-taḥrīfi wa-l-tahwīš*) and noting variants are necessary parts of publishing pre-modern texts, he nonetheless considered them "the meanest and most trivial" parts (*fa-huwa ʿindī adwanu l-ašyāʾi wa-aqalluhā*).[150] Dunyā does not see this as the work of a scholar, but of a copyist (*hāḏā ʿindī laysa min ʿamali l-ʿulamāʾi wa-lākinna-hu bi-ʿamali l-nussāḫi ašbah*).[151] The work of the scholar of Islamic philosophy is to study, analyze, and contextualize; this cannot be done so

148 Hawi, "Ibn Sina and Mysticism," 91; Elamrani-Jamal, "Vision contemplative," 145; Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 4; Anwar, "Ibn Sīnā's Philosophical Theology of Love," 340.

149 In fact, this decision seems to contradict what Dunyā had previously said about the structure of the *Pointers*. In the very brief introduction to the second volume of the 1947–1948 edition, Dunyā remarks, "His [Ibn Sīnā's] will desired, likewise, to make the title that he used in the investigations into physics [sc. *namaṭ*] the [same] title for the investigations into metaphysics. What's more, he added that he traversed the *namaṭ*s of the two sciences together, reckoning them as one" (*wa-la-qad šāʾat irādatuhu ka-ḏālika an yajʿala l-ʿunwāna llaḏī staʿmalahu fī buḥūṯi l-ṭabīʿati ʿunwānan ʿalā buḥūṯi mā baʿda l-ṭabīʿati bal la-qad zāda ʿalā ḏālika bi-an salaka anmāṭa l-ʿilmayni fī taʿdādan wāḥidan*); Dunyā (1948), *al-Išārāt*, 1948, 2:5. What I read as *bi-an salaka* could also be read as *bi-anna salka*, "the traversal of."

150 He adds, "There is no more benefit to gathering [material attributed to the author] in one place than reuniting the separation of what has been dispersed and scattered, and preserving it in one copy" (*fa-laysa li-jamʿihā fī ṣaʿīdin wāḥidin faʾidatun akṯaru min lammi šaʿaṯi hāḏā l-mutafarriqi l-mutanāṯiri wa-ṣiyānatihi fī nusḫatin wāḥidatin*); Dunyā (1960), *al-Išārāt*, 1960, 1:6.

151 1:7.

long as one's focus is trained on the establishing of texts. When it comes to his method, Dunyā ultimately declares that he relied on his scientific experience (*ḫibratī l-ʿilmiyya*) in order to distinguish between corrupt and correct. In justifying not indicating variants in an apparatus, he says, "I do not want to busy myself with what is wrong, so that I may [instead] devote myself to what is right."[152] Additionally, he notes that he bore the reader in mind: "I do not wish to preserve all of the variants in the margin and leave it to the reader to decide … It overwhelms the reader with moving his vision and discernment from the margin to the body … It assumes for each reader the ability to compare the texts and select the most correct. Is every reader like that?"[153] The lack of detail regarding his method in either edition is unfortunate. Opening to the first section of *Pointers* VIII immediately reveals a discrepancy between this edition of the text and the 1948 edition.[154] Certainly there are many more.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Dunyā's edition has not been well received by all. In a state-of-the-field essay published in 1983, Charles Butterworth observed that "Dunyā continues to publish versions of various treatises in which he replaces a critical apparatus with the explanation that he has already consulted the relevant manuscripts and selected the readings he deems sound or in which his critical apparatus consists of notes indicating that a particular word is differently rendered in some of the 'sources' (*uṣūl*)."[155] Lameer, in his review of *Pointers* editions, concluded that the lack of scholarly apparatus or discussion of witnesses in Dunyā's edition renders it of "no scholarly value whatsoever."[156] It remains, nevertheless, widely used.

After the passage of nearly six decades and many reprints of Dunyā's edition, a new edition of the *Pointers*, by Mujtabā Zāriʿī, was published in Qum in 2002; a second edition (or reprint?) appeared in 2008. This edition relies on ten witnesses, though only three of them are proper texts of the *Pointers*; four other

152 *lā urīdu an ašġala nafsī bi-mā huwa ḫaṭaʾun li-atafarraġa li-mā huwa ṣawābun*; 1:8.

153 *wa-lam aš'a an aḥtafiẓa fī l-hāmiši bi-kulli l-fawāriqi wa-adaʿa l-qāriʾa yaḫtār … fī-hā irhāqun li-l-qāriʾi bi-naqli baṣarihi wa-baṣīratihi bayna l-hāmiši wa-l-ṣulbi … taftariḍu fī kulli qāriʾin al-qudrata ʿalā an yuqārina l-nuṣūṣa wa-yastaḫliṣa aṣaḥḥahā wa-hal kullu qāriʾin ka-ḏālika*; 1:9–10.

154 The 1968 edition reads, "If internal pleasures are greater than external, even if they are not intellectual, then what do you presume [to be the case] for intellectual [pleasures]?" (*faiḏā kānati l-laḏḏātu l-bāṭinatu ʿaẓama mina l-ẓāhirati wa-in lam takun ʿaqliyyatan fa-mā ẓannuka bi-l-ʿaqliyya*). The 1948 edition reads *qawluka fī* in place of *ẓannuka bi-*; Dunyā (1968), *al-Išārāt*, 4:9.10–11; Dunyā (1948), *al-Išārāt*, 3:214.7.

155 Butterworth, "The Study of Arabic Philosophy Today," 161.

156 Lameer, "Towards a New Edition," 217.

witnesses are manuscripts of Ṭūsī's commentary, two are manuscripts of Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's commentary, and one is a lithograph containing both Rāzī's and Ṭūsī's commentary (the Arabic sigla are Zāriʿī's):

1. *alif*: MS Tehran Majlis-i Šūrā-yi Islāmī 5085. Complete copy of the *Pointers*, which Zāriʿī says dates to between 7th–8th centuries AH (13th–14th centuries CE).
2. *bāʾ*: MS Qum Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-Marʿašī al-Najafī 5548. This witness dates to 1140/1727–1728 but contains only Book I on logic.
3. *ṣād*: MS Qum Markaz-i Iḥyāʾ al-Turāṯ 146. This contains Ṭūsī's commentary on the chapters on logic. It dates to the 11th–12th/17th–18th centuries.
4. *mīm*: MS Qum Āyat Allāh al-Gulpāygānī 4/155. This also contains Ṭūsī's commentary on the logic. It dates to the 10th/16th century.
5. *ḫāʾ*: MS Tehran Majlis-i Šūrā-yi Islāmī 1847. Complete copy of Rāzī's commentary.
6. *rāʾ*: MS Tehran Majlis-i Šūrā-yi Islāmī 5285. A copy of Rāzī's commentary containing only the chapters on logic.
7. *qāf*: MS Qum Āyat Allāh al-Gulpāygānī 52/58: A copy of Ṭūsī's commentary containing only Book II. It dates to 1051/1641–1642.
8. *dāl*: MS Qum Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-Marʿašī al-Najafī 6525. A copy of Book II of the *Pointers*, completed in Muḥarram 1042/1632–1633.
9. *ṭāʾ*: MS Qum Āyat Allāh al-Gulpāygānī 26/104. A copy of Ṭūsī's commentary containing only Book II. It dates to 1079/1688.
10. *fāʾ*: A lithograph copy of Rāzī's and Ṭūsī's commentaries on Book II, printed in Egypt and Iran, and known as *Šarḥay al-Išārāt*.

As Lameer notes, the basis for Zāriʿī's edition is weak, as it contains only one complete copy of the *Pointers* and relies heavily on incomplete copies of Ṭūsī's commentary with a late provenance.[157]

When explaining his editorial method, Zāriʿī remarks that he followed three principles: 1) the accuracy of expression from a literary perspective, taking into consideration the author's style and that of his era; 2) the accuracy of expression relative to the content-matter of the text; and 3) gathering multiple manuscript witnesses to facilitate collation; and, subsequently, arriving at the highest possible state of confidence that the text produced from the editorial process accords with the original produced by the author. Unfortunately, without more details regarding his editorial process, including evaluations of each manuscript and explanations for variants, there is reason not to have such high confidence with the text that he produced. The critical apparatus, which

157 Lameer, 221–222.

appears as footnotes to the main text, indicates rejected variants. At times, Zāriʿī also identifies intratextual references. The text itself is very pleasantly presented. Each chapter (*nahj*, *namaṭ*) gets a dedicated title page. The heading for each section within a chapter is numbered and center-aligned (Zāriʿī uses brackets to indicate that he added the numbering). The text of each section is separated into paragraphs.

Unlike Dunyā, Zāriʿī does not organize the *Pointers* chapters into sections on physics, metaphysics, or Sufism. He does, nevertheless, emphasize the *Pointers*'s uniqueness from other Avicennan texts, a uniqueness that stems from what he sees as its Sufi, mystical character. In the introduction to his edition, Zāriʿī argues that although Ibn Sīnā was known for his preeminence among the Peripatetic philosophers, the truth is altogether different. While Ibn Sīnā may have composed traditionally Peripatetic texts—Zāriʿī specifically mentions *Cure*, *Salvation*, and *Provenance and Destination*—he argues that, in fact, late in his life Ibn Sīnā deviated from the Peripatetic path. This manifested, according to Zāriʿī, in Ibn Sīnā "not being satisfied by the common opinion among them [the Peripatetics] and by what relied upon purely rational argumentation."[158] Zāriʿī points to two pieces of evidence: 1) Ibn Sīnā's *Eastern Philosophy* and the concept of *ḥads* ("Guessing Correctly") developed therein, and 2) certain books that Ibn Sīnā wrote later in his life that suggest that he believed in two distinct philosophical orientations, one eastern and one western. In this regard, Zāriʿī emphasizes that Ibn Sīnā was the first to use the term *al-ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya*.[159] All this leads Zāriʿī to suggest Ibn Sīnā's "philosophy was influenced by a period of self-perfection in the well of mystical knowledge. Among his works that point to this are the *Epistle of Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, the *Epistle of the Birds*, and likewise chapters eight to ten of the *Pointers*, which similarly indicate that he believed in the unveiling of true realities through the path of the heart and witnessing."[160]

For Zāriʿī, chapters VIII–X of the *Pointers*, and the appearance of the phrase *ḥikma mutaʿāliya* therein, are key evidence in the argument that Ibn Sīnā had drunk from the well of mysticism, which had informed his promotion of an

158 *fa-huwa lam yaktafi bi-l-raʾyi l-šāʾiʿi laday-him wa-llaḏī yuʾakkadu ʿalā l-istidlāli l-ʿaqliyyi l-ṣirfi*; Zāriʿī (ed.), *al-Išārāt*, 10.

159 Zāriʿī (ed.), 10.17–18. The term appears in *Pointers* X.9.

160 *inna falsafatahu mutaʾaṯṯiratun bi-marḥali l-takāmuli mina l-mašrabi l-ʿirfāniyyi wa-min āṯārihi llatī tušīru li-hāḏā l-maʿnā risālatu ḥayyi bni yaqẓānin wa-risālatu l-ṭayri wa-kaḏālika l-namaṭu l-ṯāminu ilā l-namaṭi l-ʿāširi min kitābi l-išārāti wa-hiya tušīru ka-ḏālika ilā anna-hu kāna yuʾminu bi-kašfi l-ḥaqāʾiqi ʿan ṭarīqi l-qalbi wa-l-šuhūdi*; Zāriʿī (ed.), 10–11.

eastern method of mystical philosophy over the western, Peripatetic method. He points to X.24 to argue that Ibn Sīnā, himself, claims to have experienced (*jarraba*) the truth of certain mystical notions, and heard from others the truth of others.[161]

In addition to the claims that he makes in the introduction, Zāriʿī includes among the end-matter a glossary dedicated to "Mystical Terminology" (*al-alfāẓ al-ʿirfāniyya*). In this glossary one will find terms that are familiar from Sufi discourse, but which Ibn Sīnā appropriates into his philosophical system, like *ḏawq* (Taste) and *riyāḍa* (training).[162] These appear next to a number of terms that share a religious and/or Qurʾānic background, like *al-ġayb* (the Unseen) and *al-ḥaqq* (the Truth), and terms that form part of Arabic's common lexicon, like *al-manām* (sleep, dream) and *al-yaqaẓa* (wakefulness), which need not necessarily be considered as mystical.

4.2 *Translations*

Along with these editions, there are two complete translations of the *Pointers* into European languages: the first, into French, by Amélie-Marie Goichon; the second, into English, by Shams Inati.

Goichon's translation was published by Vrin in 1951 in celebration of Ibn Sīnā's millenary; it was reprinted in 1999. Although Goichon's translation appeared after the first publication of Dunyā's edition, she relied on Forget's edition and makes no mention of Dunyā's. Along with Forget's edition, she sought the assistance of Ṭūsī's commentary, mainly for its philological and lexicographical explanations. Goichon added very little by way of formatting or organization. She did not provide the chapters of Book II with labels of physics, metaphysics, or Sufism. Each chapter begins on a new page, with the heading and title both centered, and the latter bolded. Each section within a chapter begins on a new line with the classification (*išāra*, *tanbīh*, etc.) presented in italics. She does not number each section, unfortunately, but the comprehensive table of contents makes up for that. While she did not formally classify the final chapters of the *Pointers* as the Sufi or mystical chapters, Goichon did dedicate almost two-thirds of her seventy-four-page introduction to the question of mysticism in the *Pointers* and, more broadly, in Ibn Sīnā's philosophy. Goichon likens the final two chapters of the *Pointers* (i.e., IX–X) to Ibn Sīnā's lost *Eastern Philosophy* (*al-ḥikma al-mašriqiyya*), and sees the *Pointers* as suggest-

161 Zāriʿī (ed.), 11.3–5.

162 I address these in chapters 2 and 3 of this study, respectively. See also Rapoport, "Sufi Vocabulary, but Avicennan Philosophy."

ing an evolution in his thought, a late-in-life turn to religion and mysticism. Mysticism, in fact, is the natural culmination of his philosophical system.[163] She sees in Ibn Sīnā's use of terms like *maʿrifa*, *ʿirfān*, and *muʿārafa* in place of *ʿilm*—the former indicating knowledge of the gnostic, the latter knowledge of the scholar—clear evidence of mysticism.[164]

Similar to Goichon, Inati also sees mysticism as the "inevitable result" of Ibn Sīnā's philosophy.[165] Her translation—which appeared in three volumes between 1984–2014—brings this to the fore in a way that Goichon's did not, however: the volume dedicated to *Pointers* VIII–X carries the title *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism: Remarks and Admonitions, Part Four* (1996). Within the book itself, the end of Inati's analysis and the beginning of the translation proper are separated by a title page which reads, "Remarks and Admonitions: Part Four, Sufism."[166] The "Part Four" refers to the organization of the *Pointers*'s chapters into four volumes or parts: logic, physics, metaphysics, and Sufism. The other three parts appeared as *Remarks and Admonitions Part One: Logic* (1984) and *Ibn Sina's Remarks and Admonitions: Physics and Metaphysics; An Analysis and Annotated Translation* (2014). Although Inati states that "the title of the four parts … is drawn from the titles of the majority of the chapters in the whole work," the chapter titles themselves do not suggest this quadripartite division.[167] Instead, there is a clear affinity here to Dunyā's edition of the *Pointers*, which—to my knowledge—inaugurated presenting its chapters in four volumes or parts, and which Inati relied on for her translation.[168] The text itself has a clear presentation and is easy to navigate. Each chapter (*namaṭ*, which Inati translates as "Class") begins on its own page. Each section (*išāra*, *tanbīh*, etc., which Inati confusingly translates as "Chapter") is numbered with its heading and title center aligned.

In addition to Goichon's and Inati's complete translations, there are also translations of individual chapters.[169] Despite the important contributions that

163 Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 4–6.

164 Goichon, 34.

165 Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 63.

166 I added the punctuation, which does not appear in the text; Inati, 67.

167 Inati, 1.

168 She also compared Dunyā's edition "at every point" with Forget's; Inati, 1.

169 Michot translates *Pointers* VIII in his "Joie et bonheur." He also translates sections of chapter X as they appear in Ibn Taymiyya's commentary on that chapter; Michot, "Ibn Taymiyya's Commentary." Michael-Sebastian Noble translates sections of *Pointers* X as they appear in Rāzī's commentary; chapters 6–7 in *Philosophising the Occult*. Baffioni translates *Pointers* VIII.1–8, IX.1–3, IX.5 (partial), IX.6, and X.1–6 in *Storia della filosofia islamica*, 240–245, 256–257. Cruz Hernández includes his translation of *Pointers* IX–X as an appendix

all of these translations and analyses have made to the field, many feature numerous errors and leave questions un- or inadequately answered, especially with regard to interrogating the technical and Sufi vocabulary that appear in them and situating these chapters in the broader context of Ibn Sīnā's corpus.[170] Despite the prominent role that *Pointers* VIII–X have played in the debate concerning Ibn Sīnā and mysticism/Sufism, Jules Janssens's study is the only one that critically scrutinizes them together.[171] There are, similarly, few systematic studies that have the *Pointers* as their focus. It is far more common for scholars to adduce the *Pointers*—more accurately, parts thereof—as one piece of evidence among many in studies on broader themes pertaining to Ibn Sīnā's life, scholarship, and legacy.

5 Objectives, Methodology, and Structure

This study intends to fill this gap of scholarship on the *Pointers* by focusing on *Pointers* VII–X. Given the *Pointers*'s reputation as one of Ibn Sīnā's most difficult texts, and given the dearth of scholarship dedicated to it, the primary objective of chapters 1–4 of this study is to provide a philological and interpretive guide for critically reading and understanding the *Pointers and Reminders*. I approach the text as I imagine Ibn Zayla or Bahmanyār might have: by explicating the hints Ibn Sīnā left in the *Pointers* through careful comparison with texts spanning the entirety of his career.[172] My methodology, then—if I may paraphrase a term from Qur'ānic exegesis—, is *tafsīr Ibn Sīnā bi-bn Sīnā*: to explain Ibn Sīnā through Ibn Sīnā. Modern translators and exegetes of the *Pointers* have relied heavily on commentaries, most especially that of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274). I have endeavored to minimize reliance on the many commentaries written in the centuries after Ibn Sīnā's death. I say minimize, and

in *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 61–106. As will become clear in the following chapters, Cruz Hernández's translation often appears to be more a translation of Goichon's French translation than it does to be one of the original Arabic.

170 On the state of translations of *Pointers* VIII–X, see McGinnis, "Ibn Sīnā's Remarks and Admonitions;" the notes in Michot, "Ibn Taymiyya's Commentary," and Deborah Black's review of Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*. Inati herself notes that her predecessor, Goichon, often distorts the contents of the *Pointers*; Inati, *Remarks and Admonitions: Logic*, 9.

171 Janssens, "Philosophical Mysticism."

172 Abū Manṣūr ibn Zayla (d. 440/1048) and Bahmanyār ibn al-Marzubān (d. 458/1067) were both students of Ibn Sīnā. In a letter to Bahmanyār, Ibn Sīnā remarks that the *Pointers* should only be studied orally, face-to-face, and that only he and Ibn Zayla are permitted to teach this text; *al-Mubāḥaṭāt*, 38.8–10; French trans. in Michot, "La réponse," 155.

not eliminate, because to wholly forswear looking to commentaries for help would be impractical, perhaps foolish. As Adamson aptly observes, at times Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) provides valuable critique from an Avicennan mindset, while Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī helpfully explicates Ibn Sīnā's syntax and vocabulary.[173] Yet, as helpful as they may be, we must recognize that such commentators as Rāzī and Ṭūsī had their own intellectual and partisan motivations in composing their commentaries.[174] An uncritical reliance on them will most assuredly lead one astray.[175]

My method of interpreting the *Pointers* involves contextualizing it within Ibn Sīnā's corpus, particularly his philosophical summae and treatises dedicated to the rational soul.[176] I do this by identifying passages parallel to what one finds in the *Pointers*. I juxtapose the passages from the *Pointers* with the parallel passages to facilitate comparison and to highlight the remarkable consistency, encompassing both content and language, between the *Pointers* and the rest of Ibn Sīnā's corpus. This method, I argue, leads to the following conclusions:

1) The final four chapters of the *Pointers* fall neatly into Ibn Sīnā's schema of concluding the metaphysical sections of his summae with a discussion of the Metaphysics of the Rational Soul. These chapters present a scientific discussion and analysis of the human rational soul encompassing its nature, function, life associated with a body, and afterlife independent from a body. This discussion relies overwhelmingly, but not entirely, on arguments, vocabulary, and examples that appear regularly throughout Ibn Sīnā's corpus.
2) Ibn Sīnā does borrow certain vocabulary from another discipline. One can reasonably claim that this other discipline is Sufism. Nevertheless, it is clear that the borrowing is not conceptual. What terms Ibn Sīnā does borrow he appropriates such that they become concordant with his philosophical system. The text of *Pointers* VII–X does not support assertions that Ibn Sīnā developed therein a Sufi or mystical philosophy, nor does it support claims that the *Pointers* (at least the chapters studied in this

173 Adamson, "Avicenna and His Commentators," 120.

174 I hope to address this in a future monograph on the reception of *Pointers* VII–X in the commentary tradition.

175 For one example of where this would happen, see Gutas, "Avicenna's *al-ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya*."

176 My examination of Ibn Sīnā's body of work is not comprehensive, but I do believe it is sufficient to prove my points. More attention could be paid, particularly, to his *Philosophy*, *Notes*, and *Discussions*.

book) presents a new version of Ibn Sīnā's philosophy, is in some other capacity an absolutely unique work, or belongs to a subset of "esoteric" works that can be contrasted with his "Peripatetic" works.

When it comes to the question of Ibn Sīnā and mysticism and/or Sufism, the following chapters will show that the most one can defensibly assert is that Ibn Sīnā provides a scientific explanation of certain elements familiar from Sufism, like the affective response associated with the soul's perfection (*Pointers* VIII), the path of the knower's (*ʿārif*) perfection (*Pointers* IX), and the marvels that knowers and Friends of God (*awliyāʾ allāh*) are capable of performing (*Pointers* X). I should be clear about the directionality at play here: Ibn Sīnā is, at best, giving what he sees as the correct explanation of phenomena that Sufis discuss by grounding those phenomena in his philosophy; he is neither endorsing Sufism nor is he bringing his philosophical system closer to Sufism (or mysticism).

Each of the following chapters presents a close reading of *Pointers* VII–X, analyzing their language and content in the context of Ibn Sīnā's broader oeuvre. In the course of doing so, I provide new translations and philological analysis for much of *Pointers* VII–X, along with translations of relevant passages from other texts by Ibn Sīnā.[177] This is not a complete translation of these chapters. Instead, I aim for a balance between translating sections that are essential, problematic, or mistranslated in the past, and summarizing others. To facilitate quickly identifying where I address a given pointer or reminder in each chapter, I identify each section based on its chapter (Roman numeral) and section (Arabic numeral), emphasized with bold text. For example, the first section of the eighth chapter of the *Pointers* appears as **VIII.1**. Longer translations are presented with the English and Arabic in parallel to highlight the similarities in language and ideas found throughout Ibn Sīnā's corpus. I also do this to encourage critical engagement with my own translations. When parallel passages exist between the *Pointers* and multiple other works by Ibn Sīnā, I present the parallel passages in chronological order (see the "Chronology of Ibn Sīnā's Works" for dates). As will quickly become clear, Ibn Sīnā often copied passages from one of his works into others. This is especially the case for *Lesser Destination*, *Cure*, and *Salvation*. Inevitably, however, there are variants

177 I also pay close attention to translations by Goichon, Inati, and Cruz Hernández, as well as to partial translations as they appear in scholarship on Ibn Sīnā. I owe an immense debt to the scholars who have endeavored to translate the *Pointers*. This may not be immediately or sufficiently apparent in the ensuing chapters, as I refer to other translations more often to highlight errors than to point out accurate readings. A study like this would not have been possible without their work.

in the passages that he copied. These are typically minor and do not affect the meaning, in which case I do not address them specifically. When they are significant, I address them in the footnotes. To avoid amalgamating these texts into a version that never existed, I present the Arabic of the earliest parallel. If the same passage appears in *Lesser Destination*, *Cure*, and *Salvation*, I provide references to all three, but present only the Arabic of *Lesser Destination*.

Ibn Sīnā's *Pointers* features a minimalist organizational structure. The text is divided into two books, each featuring ten chapters (*nahj* or *namaṭ*), which consist of sections bearing such titles as pointer (*išāra*), reminder (*tanbīh*), and delusion (*wahm*). As Frank Griffel has observed, the way Ibn Sīnā divided and organized his works appears "bland and one-dimensional" when compared to the complex structures applied to Postclassical works of philosophy.[178] In his commentary on the *Pointers*, Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī addressed—some may say remedied—this characteristic of the *Pointers* by organizing the sections of each chapter into "topics" (sg. *mas'ala*); many later commentators on the *Pointers* did the same. I also follow Rāzī's custom, though without necessarily adopting the same grouping of sections. This helps to make explicit, in a way Ibn Sīnā did not, the questions he addresses and the logic behind each chapter. To conclude each chapter, I summarize its content, provide an overview of where parallels can be found in other works by Ibn Sīnā, and address whether elements of mysticism and/or Sufism are present.

While I follow Gutas in reading *Pointers* VII–X as a manifestation of Ibn Sīnā's Metaphysics of the Rational Soul, this study does not present a comprehensive analysis of the philosophical arguments found in *Pointers* VII–X and how they cohere as Metaphysics of the Rational Soul; as I aim more narrowly to provide a guide for reading and understanding the *Pointers*, such an analysis must be left to a future study.

Chapter 1 examines *Pointers* VII, which Ibn Sīnā titled "On Simplicity" (*fī l-tajrīd*). I have organized it into four topics. The first addresses the rational soul and its independence from the body. The rational soul is incorporeal; it may be associated with a body, but it is not imprinted or otherwise exist in the body. Unlike the body's sensory faculties, the rational soul does not require a corporeal instrument to function. The second topic argues against the unification of the intellect with intelligibles. This applies both to the human intellect and God, the Necessary Existent, which is pure intellect. This leads to the third topic, which addresses the nature of God's knowledge. God knows not only

178 Griffel, *Formation*, 426.

universal truths (intelligibles), but also particulars. Here Ibn Sīnā presents his challenging theory that God knows particulars in a universal way. The final topic explains how the universe emanates from God's all-encompassing knowledge in the best possible order, and how this necessarily includes both good and evil.

Chapter 2 investigates *Pointers* VIII, "On Joy and Happiness" (*fī l-bahja wa-l-saʿāda*). This chapter consists of five topics. The first presents Ibn Sīnā's argument that intellectual pleasures are superior to bodily pleasures. The second topic builds on this by discussing the nature of pleasure and pain. This, in turn, requires explaining the nature of good and evil, perfection and imperfection, and the attainment of and desire for these. The third topic expands on this by discussing how the body impedes our awareness of pleasure and pain. In the fourth topic, Ibn Sīnā explains how the body's enduring effects on the soul can lead to pain and torment in the afterlife, while souls that are adequately prepared will instead experience true happiness. It is here that he denies the possibility of transmigration of souls, while leaving open the possibility for certain souls, unprepared for the wholly incorporeal and intellectual nature of the afterlife, to be associated with a celestial body in order to experience a certain measure of imagined corporeal pleasure. The chapter concludes with the fifth topic, in which Ibn Sīnā ranks existent beings based on the level of joy they can experience.

Chapter 3 studies *Pointers* IX, "On the Stations of the Knowers" (*fī maqāmāt al-ʿārifīn*). The first of this chapter's four topics explains the difference between a knower and a non-knower. A prophet is a supreme example of Ibn Sīnā's knower. This topic addresses politics (governance) and religious practice, as it is the prophet's role to reveal God's law and to institute repetitive rituals as a reminder of the law's origin and humankind's ultimate destination. The second topic reviews the relations of the human intellect to the active intellect. The third topic explains the highest of these relations, while the fourth and final topic presents the characteristics of the knower who has reached it.

Chapter 4 focuses on the tenth and final chapter of the *Pointers*, "On the Inner Meanings of the Signs" (*fī asrār al-ayāt*). The signs alluded to in the title are the marvels (*karāmāt*) performed by Friends of God (*awliyāʾ allāh*) and the miracles (*muʿjizāt*) performed by prophets. This chapter's three topics examine Ibn Sīnā's scientific explanations for four different kinds of marvels and miracles. The first topic addresses the ability for some individuals to perform seemingly supernatural acts, like unnaturally long periods of fasting and amazing feats of strength. The second topic describes Imaginative knowledge and prophecy; in other words, how one can acquire knowledge of past, present, and

future events. The third topic addresses motive powers and prophecy. Here, Ibn Sīnā likens the power of the human soul to affect things without coming into contact with them to such recognized and accepted natural phenomena as magnetism.

Chapter 5 returns to the key elements of mysticism and Sufism that I identified earlier in this introduction—non-standard epistemology and union—and examines how these elements appear in other scholars' arguments that Ibn Sīnā elaborated a mystical/Sufi philosophy. As this study is on the *Pointers and Reminders*, I focus on arguments that rely primarily on evidence found therein. When possible, I evaluate the textual evidence supporting those arguments. I conclude by arguing that Ibn Sīnā considered a mystical union to be impossible.

6 Overview of Ibn Sīnā's Internal Faculties

Since much of what Ibn Sīnā discusses in *Pointers* VII–X is connected in some way to the human rational soul/intellect and the five internal faculties, understanding these chapters requires a familiarity with these faculties. It would be useful, then, to provide a brief overview of what Ibn Sīnā says about those them.[179] The reader already well-versed in the faculties according to Ibn Sīnā should feel comfortable proceeding to the next chapter.

The five internal faculties are all associated with the animal soul. Some of them are active, others passive/receptive, and others retentive. Some deal with *sensibilia* (*maḥsūsāt*), while others deal with connotational attributes (*maʿānī*). A given faculty cannot be both passive and active, or both receptive and retentive.[180] Each is found in a different part of the brain. Each has an instrument (a pneuma [*rūḥ*]),[181] which travels throughout the brain and body, and by which each faculty communicates with the others.

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179 For an excellent overview of Ibn Sīnā's internal senses, based on the *Pointers*, and their function in Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's theory of occult power, see Noble, *Philosophising the Occult*, 138–168, esp. 140–150. For a summary of the internal faculties, see: Ivry, "Arabic and Islamic Psychology and Philosophy of Mind", section 3 on Avicenna; and Gutas, "Intuition and Thinking," esp. 6–13.

180 Black, "Imagination and Estimation," 59.

181 To avoid any confusion, I follow the example of the Arabic translators of Greek texts by translating *rūḥ* as "pneuma" rather than the more common "spirit." The pneuma, Ibn Sīnā explains in the De Anima of the *Cure*, is a subtle body (*jism laṭīf*), the primary tool of the faculties of the soul, and what carries the forces of perception and motion to the organs; *al-Šifāʾ: al-Nafs*, 6: v.8, 232–233; *Avicenna's De Anima*, 263–264.

Beginning with the fore of the front ventricle of the brain, one finds what Ibn Sīnā calls the Common Sense (*al-ḥiss al-muštarak*), also referred to as *fantasia* (*banṭāsiyā*). The Common Sense receives data from the five external senses, as well as from the internal faculties of Imagination and Estimation. In comparison to the external senses, which merely send sensory inputs to it from the extra-mental world, it is the faculty that actually senses. It allows for us to perceive sensible objects with data arriving from multiple external faculties at the same time (e.g., that snow is both cold and white). In Ibn Sīnā's hierarchy of the corporeal faculties, the Common Sense is superior to the external senses but inferior to the Imagination and Estimation. He often speaks, then, of forms ascending or rising from the external senses to the Common Sense and descending or falling to it from the Imagination or Estimation.

Next is the Imagery (*al-ḫayāl*), which earlier in his career Ibn Sīnā referred to as the form-bearing or representational faculty (*al-muṣawwira*).[182] Located in the rear of the front ventricle, its job is to store forms and images of the data that arrive to the Common Sense from the external senses and from the Imagination. It stores these images with all of their concomitants (e.g., the image of Zayd stored in the Imagery is not the universal form of human, but the particular form of Zayd, with all of his attendant characteristics).

After the Imagery is the Imagination (*al-mutaḫayyila*, *al-taḫayyul*), located in the central ventricle of the brain. The Imagination combines and separates the forms and images that are stored in the Imagery, as well as the connotational attributes that are perceived by the Estimation and stored in the Memory (see next).[183] This is how we can see things in our mind which we have previously perceived, and also how we create new images of things, even those that do not exist (unicorns, for example). The Imagination can serve as the instrument for both the Estimation and the intellect. When the intellect uses it, the Imagination becomes the Cogitative faculty (*al-mufakkira*).[184]

Next is the Estimation (*al-wahm*), which is positioned in the rear of the middle ventricle of the brain. Its function is to perceive connotational attributes (sg. *maʿnā*).[185] Although present in sensible objects, the connotational

182 There is little consensus on how best to translate *ḫayāl*. I follow Gutas in translating *ḫayāl* as Imagery, rather than, for example, receptive or retentive imagination; Gutas, "Intellect," 2014, 6n12. For a case for "sensible memory," see Noble, *Philosophising the Occult*, 141n4.

183 For this reason, Pormann refers to this as the "active imagination," thereby distinguishing it from the receptive imagination (*ḫayāl*); Pormann, "Avicenna on Medical Practice," 103.

184 On the Imagination, see Gutas, "Imagination," 2014. On the Cogitative faculty, see Black, "Rational Imagination."

185 As the Estimation is one of the most innovative features of Ibn Sīnā's psychology, scholars have paid extensive attention to it. See, for example, see Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 127–

attributes themselves are non-sensible, meaning the five external senses cannot perceive them. By means of the Estimation Ibn Sīnā explains how animals seem to possess innate or instinctual knowledge. In so doing, he frequently resorts to the example of how a sheep knows to flee from a wolf. Upon its first ever encounter with a wolf, the sheep perceives enmity in it and that the wolf is something from which it should flee. Enmity is not a physical feature that the external senses can perceive, but is a connotational attribute that the Estimation can perceive. Another kind of connotational attribute includes certain mathematical objects.[186] In addition to perceiving connotational attributes, it also makes judgments about sensible data. These judgments are not always accurate, as Ibn Sīnā explains that the Estimation may judge honey to be avoided on account of its visual similarity to yellow bile. The Estimation is the highest faculty that belongs to non-human animals. Memory (*al-ḏikr*, *al-ḥāfiẓa*, *al-mutaḏakkira*),[187] located in the anterior ventricle of the brain, stores the connotational attributes attained by the Estimation. It is the counterpart to the Imagery.[188]

153; Black, "Estimation (*Wahm*) in Avicenna"; Black, "Imagination and Estimation"; and Robert Hall, "The *Wahm* in Ibn Sina's Psychology." I follow Hasse in referring to the *maʿnā* as "connotational attribute" rather than "intention."

186 On this, see Mohammad Saleh Zarepour, "Avicenna on Grasping Mathematical Concepts."

187 On Memory, see Tommaso Alpina, "Retaining, Remembering, Recollecting."

188 Ibn Sīnā explains the functions of the internal faculties in *al-Išārāt*, III.9, 239.7–241.4; *al-Šifāʾ: al-Nafs*, 6: IV.1, 145–150; *Avicenna's De Anima*, 163–169; *al-Najāt*, 200–202. For a medical, rather than philosophical, approach to the internal senses, see Peter Pormann, "Avicenna on Medical Practice," 102–107.

CHAPTER 1

The Soul's Independence from the Body

I should begin with the very title of *Pointers* VII: *fī l-tajrīd*, "On Simplicity." I choose not to follow prior translations of this title, such as "On Abstraction," to avoid potential confusion with Ibn Sīnā's much-debated theory of epistemic abstraction, the intellect's process of dissociating form from matter (which he addresses in *Pointers* III).[1] What this chapter is concerned with is immaterial, intellectual existence;[2] most especially, the human rational soul's existence as an intellect independent from a body.[3]

1 Goichon and Inati both translate *al-tajrīd* as "abstraction;" Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 436n1; Inati, *Physics and Metaphysics*, 166n1. The robust debate over abstraction vs. emanation in Ibn Sīnā's epistemology revolves around whether the human intellect passively receives intelligibles via emanation from the active intellect, while cognition merely prepares the intellect for this emanation; or whether the emanation occurs as a result of the intellect's abstraction of forms from material objects. On the passive, emanationist side, see Fazlur Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam*, 15; Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect*, 94; Black, "Psychology: Soul and Intellect," 319–320; Black, "How Do We Acquire Concepts?" On the active, abstraction side, see Gutas, "Intuition and Thinking"; Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 39–72; Hasse, "Avicenna on Abstraction"; Taylor, "Avicenna"; Alpina, "Intellectual Knowledge." For a persuasive solution to the dilemma, which argues that Ibn Sīnā did not see emanation and abstraction as mutually exclusive, but rather as addressing separate problems (ontological and epistemological, respectively), see Hasse, "Avicenna's Epistemological Optimism." Hasse's study responds to Cristina D'Ancona, "Degrees of Abstraction in Avicenna"; and McGinnis, "Making Abstraction Less Abstract." For a skeptical response to Hasse, which argues that the active intellect emanates upon the human intellect the power of abstraction, see Stephen Ogden, "Avicenna's Emanated Abstraction." For recent, accessible summaries and evaluations of the abstractionist-emanationist debate, see Luis Xavier López-Farjeat, "Avicenna"; and Alpina, *Subject, Definition, Activity*, 131–138.

2 Compare, for example, Ibn Sīnā's explanation of the term "intellectual realm" (*ʿālam ʿaqlī*) in the *Theology of Aristotle*: "in the realm of independence [or: detachment] from material attachments, neither mixing with them, attending to them, nor dressing anything in its [matter's] states;" (*fī ʿālami l-tajarrudi mina l-ʿalāʾiqi l-māddiyyati lā yuḫāliṭuhā wa-lā yaltafitu ilay-hā wa-lā yalbasu šayʾan bi-aḫwālihā*); "*Commentary on the* Theology of Aristotle," 38.7.

3 The rational soul is that part of us that distinguishes humans from other living beings. It has two functions: the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and the prudent management of the human body based on reason and reflection. Regarding this former capacity, Ibn Sīnā calls the soul the theoretical intellect; regarding the latter, the practical intellect. The theoretical intellect faces upward, toward the celestial realm of universal knowledge, while the practical intellect faces downward, toward the earthly realm of particular knowledge. For more on this, see Gutas, "Avicenna: The Metaphysics of the Rational Soul."

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Ibn Sīnā first aims to establish the rational soul's essential independence from the body (VII.1–6). He does this by offering several arguments for the absurdity and impossibility of the rational soul's being corporeal itself or relying on a corporeal instrument to perform its proper function. He then addresses the possibility of unity between intellect (*ʿaql*) and intelligible (*maʿqūl*) (VII.7–12). Here, Ibn Sīnā criticizes those who follow Porphyry (d. 234? BCE) in claiming that when the intellect thinks an intelligible, it becomes that intelligible. The only example when this does apply is the when the intellect, itself, is the object of its own intellection. The supreme example of this is God. This paves the way to discuss God's knowledge of particulars (VII.13–21). Here, Ibn Sīnā presents his innovative theory that God knows particulars in a universal way. After discussing God's knowledge, he explores the creative aspect of God's self-knowledge, including the emanation of the universe in a logical order of good, and explaining the presence of evil in that good order (VII.22–27). When presenting his ideas about good and evil, Ibn Sīnā reveals his overall optimism when it comes to the prevalence of good over evil. He avers that the majority of souls are characterized more by good than by evil, and therefore will experience pleasure in the afterlife. This creates a natural connection between *Pointers* VII and VIII, where he examines in more detail which souls will receive a reward in the next life, which a punishment, and why. Due to the strong and enduring association of *Pointers* VIII–X with mysticism, few other studies mention this clear and significant connection, and no other study examines it in significant detail.

In this chapter, I provide a summary and explanation of the content of *Pointers* VII. Additionally, I begin an argument that I will further develop throughout the next three chapters: Through gathering and translating parallels between *Pointers* VII–X and other texts by Ibn Sīnā that span the gamut of his career, I demonstrate that the *Pointers* represents neither 1) a major divergence from Ibn Sīnā's philosophy as we understand it through his better-known works, like the *Cure*. Rather, it is the fullest exposition of his Metaphysics of the Rational Soul. Nor is it 2) an experiment with or late-life progression toward mysticism or esotericism. To this end, I will show that the content, language, and examples he employs have parallels in many of his other works.

1 The Rational Soul's Independence from the Body

Ibn Sīnā begins this chapter right where *Pointers* VI leaves off. That chapter concludes with a discussion, over several sections, of how a diverse multiplicity can come from a single cause, and how the lower world of elemental genera-

tion and corruption comes from the last intellect of the celestial realm.[4] The first section of *Pointers* VII (**VII.1**) commences with a command to reflect upon the ontology of existence: "Contemplate how existence commenced with the noblest. [It descended from] the noblest until culminating in prime matter. Then it returned [to the noble] from the basest, [going from] the basest to the nobler, and [continuing] from the nobler until it reached the rational soul and the acquired intellect."[5]

The rational soul is the focus of the first several sections of this chapter, insofar as it is a simple, enduring existent. It is simple inasmuch as it is unadulterated by and essentially independent from matter.[6] It is only relatively dependent on the body.[7] That does not mean, however, that it has no use for a body. Although the soul is not imprinted in a body through which it subsists, the body is useful to the extent that it can serve as an instrument (*āla*) for the rational soul.[8] Even so, when the body dies, no harm comes to the soul through the loss of its instrument.

Ibn Sīnā explains in the next section (**VII.2**) that the loss of the body causes no harm because "when the rational soul has acquired the disposition to make contact with the active intellect, the loss of [its] instruments does not cause it harm. [This is] because it intellects on its own (as you already know), not by means of an instrument."[9] Here he refers to the proper activity of the rational

4 *al-Išārāt*, VI.37–42, 314–318. This last intellect is the active intellect, associated with the sphere of the moon. For accounts of creation and emanation in Ibn Sīnā's philosophy, see Catarina Belo, *Chance and Determinism*, 97–105; Janssens, "Creation and Emanation"; and Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect*, 74–83.

5 *ta'ammal kayfa btada'a l-wujūdu mina l-ašrafi fa-l-ašrafu ḥattā ntahā ilā l-hayūlā ṯumma ʿāda mina l-aḫassi fa-l-aḫassu ilā l-ašrafi fa-l-ašrafu ḥattā balaġa l-nafsa l-nāṭiqata wa-l-ʿaqla l-mustafāda*; *al-Išārāt*, VII.1, 321.2–3. Ibn Sīnā elaborates on the order of existents in the beginning of Metaphysics X.1 of the *Cure*; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, 358.7–359. On this, see also *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, II.1, 75; French trans. in Michot, *Genèse et Retour*, 54.

6 "The soul is an intellectual thing essentially independent from matter" (*al-nafs šayʾun ʿaqliyyun mujarradu l-ḏāti ʿani l-māddati*); "*Commentary on the* Theology of Aristotle," 39.15.

7 The soul is relatively dependent because it does, in fact, have metaphysical and epistemological needs for the body: in order to come into existence, be individuated, and achieve its perfection, which then grants it immortality separate from the body. On this "middle view between [Neoplatonic] radical dualism and radical materialism" of the soul, see Adamson, "Correcting Plotinus"; see also Alpina, *Subject, Definition, Activity*, 117–127. On the soul's temporal origination with the body and its survival apart from the body, see Mousavian and Mostafavi, "Avicenna"; Marmura, "Some Questions"; and Druart, "The Human Soul's Individuation."

8 *al-Išārāt*, VII.1, 321.5–6. Ibn Sīnā returns to this in *Pointers* X, where he clarifies the role of the Imagination as the soul's instrument when it comes to prophecy.

9 *iḏa kānati l-nafsu l-nāṭiqatu qadi stafādat malakata l-ittiṣāli bi-l-ʿaqli l-faʿʿāli lam yadurrihā*

soul as theoretical intellect: intellection, or the act of thinking and understanding the intelligibles. Ibn Sīnā dedicates the remainder of this topic to establishing that the rational soul is neither corporeal nor acts via a corporeal instrument. He starts by positing the following hypothetical to indicate that the rational soul has its own activity independent of any instrument:

ولو عقلت بآلتها لكان لا يعرض للآلة كلال البتّة إلّا ويعرض للقوّة كلال كما يعرض لا محالة لقوى الحسّ والحركة ولكن ليس يعرض هذا الكلال بل كثيراً ما تكون القوى الحسّيّة والحركيّة في طريق الانحلال والقوّة العقليّة إمّا ثابتة وإمّا في طريق النموّ والازدياد

If it were to intellect by means of an instrument, then the instrument would not experience any fatigue at all without the faculty [also] experiencing it, as happens with the faculties of sensation and motion, of course. But this fatigue does not occur; indeed, oftentimes the sensory and motor faculties are on the way to becoming weak, but the intellectual faculty is either stable or on the way to growth and increase.[10]

That the intellect, if it required a corporeal instrument, would become fatigued in the same way that the physical senses do is something that Ibn Sīnā treats clearly and consistently throughout his corpus. (I have placed the relevant terminology in bold):

Compendium

لا شكّ أن الجسم الحيوانيّ والآلات الحيوانيّة إذا استوفين سنّ **النموّ** وسنّ **الوقوف أخذت في الذبول** والتنقّص **وضعف** القوّة و**كلال** المنّة وذلك عند الإنافة على **الأربعين** سنة ولو كانت القوّة الناطقة العاقلة قوّة جسمانيّة آليّة لكان لا يوجد أحد من الناس في هذه السنين إلّا وقد

There is no doubt that when the animal body and animal instruments complete the age of growth and [reach] the age of **stoppage**, they begin to **wither** and diminish, [with a] **weakening** of strength and **languishing** of vigor. This happens when [one] exceeds **forty** years of age. If the rational, intellecting faculty were a corporeal, instrumental faculty, then there

fiqdānu l-ālāti li-anna-hā taʿqilu bi-ḏātihā ka-mā ʿalimta lā bi-ālatihā; VII.2, 321.10–322.1. Ibn Sīnā reiterates this in his commentary on the *Theology of Aristotle*: "Intelligibles are not attained except by the faculties belonging naturally to the substance of the soul, without [any] external instrument" (*fa-inna l-maʿqūlāti lā tudraku illā bi-l-quwā l-ġarīziyyati llatī li-l-jawhari l-nafsāniyyi dūna l-ālāti l-ḫārijati*); "*Commentary on the* Theology of Aristotle," 71.4–5.

10 *al-Išārāt*, VII.2, 322.2–5.

would be no one of this age for whom this faculty has not begun to diminish. But, the matter **for most people** is the opposite of this.[11]

أخذت قوّته هذه تنتقص ولكنّ الأمر في **أكثر الناس** على خلاف هذا

This passage appears in Ibn Sīnā's very first work, written when he was around eighteen, in the final years of the 4th/10th century.[12] It establishes that despite Ibn Sīnā's young age, he had already determined precisely how the soul relates to the body, and how he would express it. The following passages illustrate how strikingly consistent he was in this regard (something which applies, as we shall see, to many other elements of his doctrines on the soul).

Gift

It is clear that bodies subject to **growth begin to weaken** in **old age**. The same goes for all faculties that accompany them [the bodies]. If the substrate of knowledge were a body or a corporeal faculty whose growth depends on the body's perfection and whose strength [depends on] its strength, then old age would necessarily make the discerning faculty or discerning substance too weak to intellect wisdom … But we see him whose age advances and whose corporeal substance begins to **wither** become of stronger discernment than he was [before].[13]

من البيّن أنّ الأجسام الواقعة تحت **النموّ تأخذ** في سنّ **الشيخوخة في الضعف** وكذلك جميع القوى الملابسة لها ولو كان محلّ العلم جسماً أو قوّة جسمانيّة تتعلّق تنميتها بكمال الجسم وقوّتها بقوّته لكانت الشيخوخة على الاضطرار تضعف القوّة المميّزة أو الجوهر التمييزي عن تعقّل الحكمة … وقد نرى من يكبر سنّه ويأخذ جوهره الجسمانيّ في **الذبول** يكون أقوى تمييزاً مما كان

Provenance and Destination

If [the soul] were to intellect by means of an instrument, then **old age** would necessitate **feebleness** in the intellect just as it necessitates feebleness in the Estimation, Guessing Correctly, the senses, and the Imagination. That is because these faculties function by means of an instrument. When the instrument fatigues, the function fatigues, as well …

ولو كانت تعقل بآلة لكانت **الشيخوخة** توجب في كلّ شيخ **وهناً** في العقل كما توجب وهناً في الوهم والحدس والحسّ والتخيّل فإنّ ذلك بسبب أنّ فعل هذه القوى بالآلة فإذا كلّت الآلة كَلَّ الفعل …

11 *Compendium on the Soul*, in *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, 175.6–10.

12 Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 80–83.

13 "Risālat al-Tuḥfa," 9.9–14.

It has become clear that the intellect is not a corporeal instrument, otherwise it would not be possible at all for it to remain in a single state among the elderly. The intellect, however, **in most cases** increases in strength after the **age of forty**, which is when **the body begins to weaken.**[14]

فقد بان أنّ العقل ليس بآلة جسمانيّة وإلّا لكان لا يمكن أن يبقى على حالة واحدة في الشيوخ البتّة ولكنّ العقل في **أكثر الأمر** يزداد قوّة بعد **الأربعين** وهناك **يأخذ البدن في الضعف**

Immolation Destination

If the rational soul were to subsist in matter, then it would necessarily **weaken** with the weakening of the matter. In all cases, **old-age** would **enfeeble** the rational faculty like it does the faculties of sensation and motion, which subsist in matter. But in many—nay, most—cases, elderly peoples' intellectual faculty only strengthens with the weakness of the body after turning **forty** (the **terminus** of the body's strength), even more so upon reaching sixty, when **the body is overcome with weakness.**[15]

وأيضاً لو كانت النفس الناطقة قائمة في المادّة لكانت **تضعف** بضعف المادّة ضرورةً وكانت **الشيخوخة** في جميع الأحوال **توهن** القوّة النطقيّة كما توهن القوى الحسّيّة والحركيّة القائمة في المادّة لكنّه في كثير من المشايخ بل في أكثرهم إنّما تشتدّ القوّة العقليّة عند ضعف البدن وبعد **الأربعين** وهو **منتهى** قوّة البدن ولا سيّما عند الستّين وقد **أخذ البدن في الضعف**

Elements

It happens to them [sensory faculties] that, when the body **starts to weaken** after the age of **stoppage** [of the body's growth], they all weaken in every individual. There is not one individual [of this age] with sound sensory faculties.[16]

ويعرض لها أن البدن إذا **أخذ يضعف** بعد سنّ **الوقوف** أن يضعف جميعها في كلّ شخص فلا يكون ولا شخص واحد تسلم فيه القوّة الحسّاسيّة

14 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.9, 104.15–22. It is odd that Ibn Sīnā would include Guessing Correctly (*ḥads*) among the faculties/powers that diminish as the body ages and weakens, since this is a function of the intellect. It may have to do with the evolution of his thinking on *ḥads* (this being one aspect of his psychology that Ibn Sīnā did substantively change over his career), going from involving a mental motion to being a state of mind. On *ḥads* and its evolution in Ibn Sīnā, see Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 179–201; Gutas, "Intuition and Thinking"; Adamson and Noble, "Intuition in the Avicennan Tradition."

15 *al-Aḍḥawiyya*, V, 140.16–141.5.

16 *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 40.11–13.

Lesser Destination, Cure, Salvation

Furthermore, the faculties of all parts of the body **begin to weaken** after [reaching] the **terminus** of growth and [its] **coming to a stop**. That [happens] before **forty** or upon [turning] **forty**. But in **most cases**, this faculty only strengthens after that.[17]

وأيضاً فإنّ البدن **تأخذ** أجزاؤها كلّها **تضعف** قواها بعد **منتهى** النشوء **والوقوف** وذلك دون **الأربعين** أو عند **الأربعين** وهذه القوّة إنّما تقوى بعد ذلك في **أكثر الأمر**

Guidance

If [the rational soul] were to attain by means of an instrument, then attaining something strong in its effect would **render it unable** to attain something weak in its effect, as is the case with vision and hearing … and everyone over **forty** would be **overcome by weakness** in their intellect just as they are in their [physical senses], but **most of them** actually **increase** in insight after that age.[18]

لو كانت تدرك بآلة لكان إدراك القويّ **يوهنها** عن إدراك الضعيف في أثره كالحال في السمع والبصر … ولكان كلّ مَن نيّف على **أربعين أخذ بضعف** في أن يعقل كما في أن يحسّ إلّا أنّ **أكثرهم يزدادون** بعد ذلك استبصاراً

Ibn Sīnā maintained with remarkable regularity that the intellect most certainly does not rely on a corporeal instrument to attain intelligibles. The strengthening of one's intellect and the diminishing of one's body as one ages—a common human experience—clearly evinces that this must be so.[19]

In the following section (**VII.3**), he continues addressing the question of fatigue and its relation to the corporeal faculties and the (incorporeal) rational faculty. A strong stimulus, he observes, will render the sensory faculties unable to perceive subsequent weaker stimuli: a whisper after a blast of thunder, a subtle movement after a blinding light. This is because strong stimuli temporarily weaken corporeal senses. The incorporeal rational faculty, however, suffers no such deficiency; in fact, it grows only stronger after intense thought.

17 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, VII, 93.3–4; *Avicenna's De Anima*, V.2, 219.10–12; *al-Najāt*, 219.11–13; cf. English trans. of *Salvation* in Rahman, *Avicenna's Psychology*, 53.

18 *al-Hidāya*, II.8, 222.2–6.

19 The same argument appears, albeit in less detail, in *al-Mubāḥaṭāt*, §§ 663–664, 223.8–14.

تأمّل أيضاً أنّ القوى القائمة بالأبدان يكلّها تكرّر الأفاعيل لا سيّما القويّة وخصوصاً إذا أتبعت فعلاً فعلاً على الفور وكان الضعيف في مثل تلك الحال غير مشعور به كالرائحة الضعيفة إثر القويّة وأفعال القوّة العاقلة قد تكون كثيراً بخلاف ما وُصِفَ

Consider also that faculties subsisting in a body are fatigued by the repetition of actions, especially strong ones. This is particularly so when they [the faculties] experience one action immediately following another. In circumstances like this, weak [actions] pass by unnoticed, like a weak odor immediately after a strong one. The acts of the intellecting faculty are indeed often the opposite of what has just been described.[20]

This point is also very familiar from his earlier works:

Compendium on the Soul

إنّ كلّ ما أدرك شيئاً بمشاركة الجسم فهما تكرّرت عليه مدركات شاقّة أدت إلى إفساده وإيراد الكلال عليه لوهي الآلة ... ولذلك تضعف القوّة المبصرة مهما أدمنت النظر إلى صورة الشمس وقوّة السامعة إذا تكرّرت وصول الأصوات القويّة إليها ثم هذه القوّة أعني المتصوّرة للمعقولات كلّما أدركت المعقولات الشاقّة صارت على فعلها أقوى

Whenever strong objects of attainment recur to that which attains something with the assistance of the body, they lead to its corruption and the onset of fatigue due to the weakness of the instrument... Because of this, the faculty of sight weakens whenever it applies itself to looking at the sun, and the faculty of hearing [weakens] whenever strong sounds repeatedly reach it. Whenever this faculty—I mean the one that conceptualizes the intelligibles—attains intense intelligibles, it becomes more capable of [performing] its activity.[21]

Gift

القوّة إن كانت تحتاج في إدراكها وتصوّرها إلى جسم من الأجسام فبيّن أنّها مهما أدركت معقولاً قويّاً لم تقوَ عند الرجوع عنه على إدراك معقول أضعف منه ... ونحن نشاهد الجوهر الذي هو محلّ الحكمة بها قويت الصورة الحالّة فيه

If the faculty needed a body in order to attain or conceptualize [intelligibles], it is clear that whenever it attains a strong intelligible, it would not be able to attain, after relinquishing it, a weaker intelligible ... But we observe the substance that is the substrate of wisdom: whenever[22] the form inhering in it is strong,

20 *al-Išārāt*, VII.3, 322.12–323.1.

21 *Compendium on the Soul* in *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, IX, 174.10–14.

22 I follow the editor's suggestion of reading *bi-hā qawiyat* as *mahmā qawiyat*.

its [the substance's] power increases through it. But if it were a body or corporeal, then the matter would be the opposite.[23]

ازداد بذلك قوّته ولو كان جسماً أو جسمانيّاً لكان الأمر بالضدّ

Provenance and Destination

Furthermore, if it were the case that the intellect acts by means of a bodily instrument, then the power of the intellect would be diminished by its [body's] use of it with difficult intelligibles due to the passivity of the instrument; and it would, when it turns away from a strong intelligible, not attain a weak one, since the instrument would have been acted upon. [This is] like how using strong *sensibilia* weakens the senses. There remains in [the senses] afterward an effect which prevents them[24] from being aware of weak *sensibilia*.[25] This is the same concerning colors, tastes, smells, sounds, and objects of touch.[26]

وأيضاً فلو كان العقل فاعلاً بآلة من البدن لكان قوّة العقل تنتقص باستعمالها في المعقولات الصعبة لانفعال الآلة ولكانت إذا أدبرت عن معقول قويّ لم يدرك الضعيف لأنّ الآلة تكون انفعلت مثل أنّ الحسّ يضعفه استعمال المحسوسات القويّة ويبقى بعدها فيه أثر يمنعها من الشعور بالمحسوسات الضعيفة وهذا في الألوان والطعوم والأراييح والأصوات والملامس واحد

Immolation Destination

If the rational soul were to subsist in matter, then it would not attain weak intelligibles in the wake of a strong intelligible's arrival… [This is] just like how the eye does not see dim things after a strong light, nor do the ears hear faint sounds after screams and strong sounds.[27]

لو كانت النفس الناطقة قائمة في المادّة لكان المعقول القويّ الوارد عليها لا يدرك في أثره المعقول الضعيف … كما أنّ العين لا تبصر بعد النور القويّ الأشياء الخفيّة والأذن لا يسمع بعد الصراخ والصوت القويّ الأصوات الخفيّة

23 "Risālat al-Tuḥfa," 8.7–14.

24 The feminine pronoun in *yamnaʿuhā* should be masculine, referring back to *al-ḥiss*.

25 The text reads *bi-l-maḥsūsāt al-ʿaqliyya al-ḍaʿīfa*. I have omitted *al-ʿaqliyya*, as it contradicts the sense of the passage; cf. "weakly sensible things" in Michot, *Genèse et Retour*, 71.

26 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.9, 104.23–105.4.

27 *al-Aḍḥawiyya*, V, 140.10–13.

Elements

When it [a bodily faculty] is acted upon by a strong sensible object, it does not sense a weak one's effect because it attains only by means of the instrument's passivity. When the passivity intensifies, the effect becomes firmly established. When the effect becomes firmly established, another [effect's] stimulation [of the instrument] along with it is not completed.[28]

إذا انفعلت عن محسوس قويّ لم يحسّ بالضعيف أثره لأنّها إنّما تدرك بانفعال آلة وإذا اشتدّ الانفعال ثبت الأثر وإذا ثبت الأثر لم يتمّ انتعاش غيره معه

Lesser Destination, Cure, Salvation

Furthermore, what confirms this for us and what we are convinced of is that, due to continuous operation, faculties that attain by the imprinting of forms in instruments grow fatigued. [This is] because continuous motion fatigues the instruments and corrupts their temperaments, which are their substance and nature. Strong things that weary [the ability] to attain weaken them [faculties of attainment] and at times cause their decay, to the point that they do not attain something weaker which comes after them, due to their being immersed in being acted upon by the wearying thing. This is like the case of the senses: *Sensibilia* that are wearying and repetitive weaken them and at times cause their decay, like a forceful light does to vision and intense thunder does to hearing. Upon attaining something strong, [the senses] do not have the strength to attain something weak. That which sees a great light does not see at the same time or immediately thereafter a weak

وأيضاً مما يشهد لنا بهذا ونقنع فيه أنّ القوى الدرّاكة بانطباع الصور في الآلات يعرض لها من إدامة العمل أن تكلّ لأجل أنّ الآلات تكلّها إدامة الحركة وتفسد مزاجها الذي هو جوهرها وطبيعتها والأمور القويّة الشاقّة الإدراك توهنها وربّما أفسدتها حتى لا تدرك وراءها الأضعف منها لانغماسها في الانفعال عن الشاقّ كما في الحسّ فإنّ المحسوسات الشاقّة والمتكرّرة تضعفه وربّما أفسدته كالضوء القويّ للبصر والرعد الشديد للسمع وعند إدراك القويّ لا تقوى على إدراك الضعيف فإنّ المبصِر ضوءاً عظيماً لا يبصر معه ولا عقيبه ضوءاً ضعيفاً والسامع صوتاً عظيماً لا يسمع معه ولا عقيبه صوتاً ضعيفاً ومن ذاق الحلاوة الشديدة لا يحسّ بعدها بالضعيفة والأمر في القوّة العقليّة بالعكس فإنّ

28 *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 40.9–11.

light; that which hears a great sound does not hear at the same time or immediately thereafter a weak sound; and that which tastes intense sweetness does not sense after it a weak [sweetness]. But the matter is the opposite for the intellectual faculty. Its continuous intellection and its conceptualizing of stronger things imparts to it a strength and an ease of receiving whatever weaker things come after them.[29]

إدامتها للتعقّل وتصوّرها للأمر الأقوى يكسبها قوةً وسهولة قبول لما بعدها ممّا هو أضعف منها

Ibn Sīnā has thus far put forth two arguments to show that the intellect cannot be corporeal or rely on a corporeal instrument. Experience shows that unlike corporeal faculties, the intellect does not decline with age; in fact, it strengthens. Likewise, whereas corporeal faculties grow fatigued from use—particularly after receiving strong stimuli—the intellect does not; to the contrary, the intellect is just as able, or even more able, to act upon weaker things after stronger ones.[30] Having thus begun to differentiate between the incorporeal rational faculty and corporeal faculties, Ibn Sīnā expands on the differences in **VII.4.**

That whose activity is through an instrument, but does not itself have a proper activity, does not act with respect to the instrument. Because of this, the sensory faculties do not attain their instruments in any way, nor do they attain their attainments in any way. [This is] because they do not have instruments for [attaining] their instruments and attainments, nor do they have any activity except through their instruments. But the intellectual faculty is not like that, for it intellects everything.[31]

ما كان فعله بالآلة ولم يكن له فعل خاصّ لم يكن له فعل في الآلة ولهذا فإنّ القوى الحسّاسة لا تدرك آلاتها بوجه ولا تدرك إدراكاتها بوجه لأنّها لا آلات لها إلى آلاتها وإدراكاتها ولا فعل لها إلّا بآلتها وليست القوى العقليّة كذلك فإنّها تعقل كلّ شيء

29 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, VII, 92.5–13; *Avicenna's De Anima*, V.2, 218.15–219.6; *al-Najāt*, 218.23–219.7; cf. trans. of *Salvation* in Rahman, *Avicenna's Psychology*, 52–53.

30 Ibn Sīnā also adduces this point, though in different terms, in *al-Mubāḥaṭāt*, § 725, 2474.4–11.

31 *al-Išārāt*, VII.4, 323.3–6.

Not only do corporeal faculties become weak after receiving strong stimuli, they have no proper activity of their own. The corporeal sensory faculties are able to act only through the use of an instrument; unlike the rational soul, they have no independent function. Because of this, they are unable to attain knowledge of their instrument, for this would require another instrument dedicated to that. To know the acts and attainments of this instrument would require yet another instrument, which reduces to an absurdity. Ibn Sīnā commonly relied upon this *reductio ad absurdum*.[32]

Provenance and Destination

This faculty acts on its own without an instrument. This is because it intellects itself, it intellects its instrument, and it intellects the fact that it intellects. But it has no instrument for its instrument, or for itself, or for its act. If it were to intellect through an instrument, then it would not intellect [its] instrument, nor itself, nor its act, since its instrument would be between it and something else, but there would not be an instrument between it and itself, its instrument, and its act. Because of this, the senses do not sense themselves, their instruments, or their act of sensation, since they sense by means of an instrument.[33]

هذه القوّة تفعل بذاتها بلا آلة وذلك لأنّها تعقل ذاتها وتعقل آلتها وتعقل أنّها عقلت وليست لها آلة إلى آلتها ولا إلى ذاتها وفعلها ولو كانت تعقل بآلة لكانت لا تعقل الآلة ولا ذاتها ولا فعلها إذ كانت الآلة لها بينها وبين غيرها ولم يكن بينها وبين ذاتها وآلتها وفعلها آلة ولهذا كان الحسّ لا يحسّ ذاته ولا آلته ولا إحساسه لأنّه كان يحسّ بآلة

Immolation Destination

It is unavoidable that the human soul's intellection of its intelligibles is either[34] through the mediation of its instrument and its matter, or it is on its own. We say: That is not whatsoever through the mediation of an instrument or of matter because the rational soul intellects its instrument and itself, and it intellects

النفس الإنسانيّة لا يخلو في تعقّلها لمعقولاتها إمّا أن يكون بتوسّط آلتها ومادّتها أو بذاتها فنقول ليس ذلك بتوسّط آلة ولا مادّة البتّة لأنّ النفس الناطقة تعقل آلتها وذاتها وتعقل أنّها عقلت وليس بينها وبين الآلة والمادّة مادّة وآلة ولا بين

32 Ibn Sīnā presents the same argument, albeit without the *reductio*, in *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 43.11–44.14.

33 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.9, 104.9–14.

34 Reading *immā* against the editor's *ammā*.

the fact that it intellects. But there is no matter or instrument between it and the instrument and matter; nor is there another instrument between it, itself, and its intellect. Therefore, the rational soul intellects on its own.[35]

ذاتها وعقلها آلة أخرى فإذن النفس الناطقة قد تعقل بذاتها

Lesser Destination, Cure, Salvation

If the intellectual faculty were to intellect through a bodily instrument, such that its proper activity would be completed only through employing this bodily instrument, then it would be necessary that it not intellect itself, that it not intellect its instrument, and that it not intellect the fact that it intellects. [This is] because there would be no instrument between it and itself, nor would there be an instrument between it and its instrument, nor would there be an instrument between it and the fact that it intellects. Yet, it intellects itself and its instrument—such as it is called—and the fact that it intellects. Therefore, it intellects on its own, not through an instrument.[36]

إن القوّة العقليّة لو كانت تعقل بالآلة الجسدانيّة حتّى يكون فعلها الخاصّ إنّما يستتمّ باستعمال تلك الآلة الجسدانيّة لكان يجب أن لا تعقل ذاتها وأن لا تعقل الآلة وأن لا تعقل أنها عقلت فإنه ليس لها بينها وبين ذاتها آلة وليس لها بينها وبين آلتها آلة وليس لها بينها وبين أنها عقلت آلة لكنّها تعقل ذاتها وآلتها التي تدعى لها وأنّها عقلت فإذن تعقل بذاتها لا بآلة

Ibn Sīnā has here offered a third way to establish the rational soul's incorporeality: its use of a corporeal instrument to perform its activity would result in an absurdity. In the following section (**VII.5**), he addresses another hypothetical, which posits that the rational soul is imprinted in a body. In such a case, it must be imprinted in some organ of the body, for example the heart or brain. If this were so, the rational soul would either always be intellecting its corporeal substrate, sometimes doing so, or not at all. This is because the rational faculty engages in intellection "only when it obtains the form of an object of intellection."[37] Obtaining the form of this object leads to a problem when we assume that the intellect is imprinted in matter.

35 *al-Aḍḥawiyya*, V, 139.6–11.

36 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, VII, 90.6–10; *Avicenna's De Anima*, V.2, 216.18–217.4; *al-Najāt*, 217.19–23; cf. trans. in *Avicenna's Psychology*, 50–51.

37 *li-anna-hā inna-mā tataʿaqqalu bi-ḥuṣūli ṣūrati l-mutaʿaqqali la-hā*; *al-Išārāt*, VII.5, 323.9–10. Compare with *kānat inna-mā taʿaqquluhā li-wuṣūli l-ṣūrati ilay-hā* in *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, VII, 91.1; *Avicenna's De Anima*, V.2, 217.9–10; *al-Najāt*, 218.3.

ولأنّها مادّيّة فيلزم أن يكون ما يحصل لها من صورة المتعقّل من مادّته موجوداً في مادّته أيضاً ولأنّ حصوله متجدّد فهو غير الصورة التي لم تزل له في مادّته لمادّته بالعدد فيكون قد حصل في مادّة مكنوفة بأعراض بأعيانها صورتان لشيء واحد معاً وقد سبق بيان فساد هذا

Since it [the intellectual faculty] is material, it follows that what it acquires—namely the form of the object of intellection [which comes] from its matter—also exists in its matter. Since the acquisition [of the form] is renewed, it is not numerically speaking the form that continues to belong to it in its matter [and] for its matter. Therefore, there will have occurred—in matter enveloped by accidents in its individuals—two forms for one thing simultaneously. The explanation of the falseness of this has preceded.

Ibn Sīnā has, for the sake of argument, postulated that the intellect is material and is likewise imprinted in matter. Material things cannot attain something independently; they must act through an instrument. The forms that they obtain will then be present in that instrument. When the intellect attains the form of that same object anew, that form is different numerically—but not qualitatively—from the form that it previously acquired and that remains in its matter. Two forms, therefore, of the same object are present in the material instrument at the same time. Ibn Sīnā declares this to be impossible, stating that he has already discussed the explanation elsewhere in the *Pointers*.

This oblique reference is to *Pointers* IV.19, in which he asserts that things with the same specific definition (*ḥadd nawʿī*) differ only due to certain causes. Each one is individuated by a cause. Therefore, there cannot be two blacks or two whites in the same thing, unless there is some difference between the two in terms of subject or the like.[38] Ibn Sīnā is more expansive in his discussion of this matter in the *Lesser Destination*, *Cure*, and *Salvation*, where he mentions that such differences can be due to differences in matter, states, or accidents; the difference between universal and particular; or the difference between what exists in matter or abstracted from matter.[39] Since in the hypothetical being considered here, the two forms do not carry such a qualitative difference, the scenario is impossible.

This eliminates the option that the intellect is only sometimes intellecting its corporeal substrate, leaving the "always" or "not at all" options.

38 *al-Išārāt*, IV.19, 271.

39 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, VII, 91.2–4; *Avicenna's De Anima*, V.2, 217.11–14; *al-Najāt*, 218.4–5.

فإذن هذه الصورة التي بها تصير القوّة المتعقّلة متعقّلة لآلتها تكون الصورة التي للشيء الذي فيه القوّة المتعقّلة والقوّة المتعقّلة مقارنة لها دائماً فإمّا أن تكون تلك المقارنة توجب التعقّل دائماً أو لا تحتمل التعقّل أصلاً وليس ولا واحد من الأمرين بصحيح

Therefore, this form—by which the intellecting faculty becomes intellecting of its instrument—is the form that belongs to the thing in which the intellecting faculty exists. The intellecting faculty is always linked to it [the form]. This link either necessitates permanent intellection or does not support intellection at all. But neither of these two options is correct.[40]

If the intellect is imprinted in the brain, it intellects its instrument by obtaining the brain's form. Since the intellect is always linked to this form, it must always be intellecting its instrument, or never at all. The latter is prima facie false. The former is false on account of experience. Humans are not always thinking of their body parts, like the brain.[41] But if the intellect were imprinted in the brain, that would have to be the case. Since it is not, it is not possible for the intellect to be corporeal, imprinted in matter, and reliant on a corporeal tool.

The next section (**VII.6**) concludes this first topic of *Pointers* VII. Ibn Sīnā begins by repeating the overarching point: "Know from this that our intellecting substance is capable of intellecting on its own."[42] In other words, the rational soul is neither corporeal itself nor does it rely on a body or tool in performing its primary function, which is to think and understand the intelligibles. Since it does not rely on a body to think the intelligibles, it can continue doing so even after the body's death severs the intellect's connection with it.

This incorporeality of the rational soul is what Ibn Sīnā calls a "fundamental principle" (*aṣl*):

ولأنّه أصل فلن يكون مركّباً من قوّة قابلة للفساد مقارنة لقوّة الثبات فإن أُخِذَت لا على أنّها أصل بل كالمركّب من شيء كالهيولى وشيء كالصورة عمدنا بالكلام نحو الأصل من جزئيه

Since it is a fundamental principle, it shall not be composed of a faculty receptive of corruption linked to the faculty of stability. If it[43] is taken not to be a fundamental principle but rather to be like something composed of one thing (like matter) and another thing (like form), we [must] then proceed to talk about a "fundamental principle" with regard to its two parts.

40 *al-Išārāt*, VII.5, 323.12–324.5.

41 Ṭūsī makes this point in his commentary; Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ*, 2:877.16–17.

42 *fa-ʿlam min hāḏā anna l-jawhara l-ʿāqila min-nā la-hu an yaʿqila bi-ḏātihi*; *al-Išārāt*, VII.6, 324.7.

43 The initial, masculine pronoun refers to "the intellecting substance" (*al-jawhar al-ʿāqil*).

والأعراض وجودها في موضوعاتها فقوّة فسادها وحدوثها هي في موضوعاتها فلم يجتمع فيها تركيب وإذا كان كذلك لم تكن أمثال هذه في أنفسها قابلة للفساد بعد وجوبها بعللها وثباتها بها

Accidents' existence is in their subjects. The potentiality of their corruption and origination is in their subjects. Therefore, composition does not occur in them.[44] If this is the case, the likes of these are not in themselves capable of corruption after they are made necessary by means of their causes and [after] becoming stable through them.[45]

The fundamental principle (*aṣl*) that Ibn Sīnā proposes here is that the rational soul is a simple, indivisible existent, not composed of matter and form and not possessing the potentiality for corruption. He says much the same in one of his final compositions, *Letter to Kiyā*, wherein he observes that Aristotle had worked out the "Fundamental Principle, namely, that the thing in which the universal intelligibles are conceived is indivisible. He [Aristotle] thus precluded the possibility that it is corporeal substance which receives the [universal] intelligible concepts. What receives them, therefore, is a substance subsisting by itself, neither divisible [itself] nor [existing] in something divisible on account of which it could become divisible."[46]

That what receives the intelligibles is simple, neither divisible nor existing in something divisible, relates to what Ibn Sīnā addresses rather elliptically in the second paragraph of VII.6: Accidents, which are simple, exist in their subjects, which are composed of matter and form. Despite being simple existents, accidents are susceptible to corruption. Even though accidents have the potential for corruption, this does not negate their simplicity. This is because that potentiality belongs not to the accident, but to the subject in which it inheres; more precisely, to its matter. Ibn Sīnā elaborates this in the *Lesser Destination* (and

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While in general this remains the subject of the feminine gendered *uḥiḍat*, the proper subject must be *al-quwwa* ("faculty") or an implied *al-quwwa l-ʿāqila* ("the intellecting faculty"), which would explain the change from masculine to feminine.

44 The feminine pronoun in *fī-hā* ("in them") refers to the accidents, not their subjects. Inati's translation of *fa-lā tajtamiʿ fī-hā* reads, "Hence no composition is formed in their subject." Inati explains in a footnote that she actually understands this as "formed in it" and reads the feminine pronoun as referring to the rational faculty; Inati, *Physics and Metaphysics*, 169 and note 13. While it is ultimately correct to say that no composition occurs in the rational soul (for this is the overall point that Ibn Sīnā is arguing), the rational faculty is not the pronoun's referent; rather, it is accidents (*al-aʿrāḍ*).

45 *al-Išārāt*, VII.6, 324.7–13.

46 *Letter to Kiyā*, trans. in Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 55. On Ibn Sīnā's notion of fundamental principle, see Gutas, 250–252.

repeats it in the *Cure* and *Salvation*), where he similarly refers to the rational soul as a fundamental principle (*aṣl*). Here, he explains,

فبيّن أنّ كلّ شيء هو بسيط غير مركّب أو هو أصل مركّب وسنخه فهو غير مجتمع فيه فعل أن يبقى وقوّة أن يعدم بالقياس إلى ذاته ... وأمّا الكائنات التي تفسد فإنّ الفاسد منها هو المركّب المجتمع وقوّة أن يفسد أو يبقى ليس في المعنى الذي به المركّب واحد بل في المادّة التي هي بالقوّة قابلة كلا الضدّين فليس إذن في الفاسد المركّب لا قوّة أن يبقى ولا قوّة أن يفسد فلم يجتمعا فيه ... والبسائط التي في المادّة فإنّ قوّة فسادها هو في المادّة لا في جوهرها

It is clear that anything that is simple and not composite, or is the fundamental principle and root of something composite, in relation to itself does not combine in itself the actuality of persisting and the potentiality of not existing ... As for the generated things that do corrupt, that part of them that undergoes corruption is the composite combination. Now the potentiality to corrupt or to persist is not in the causal factor whereby the composite thing is one [i.e., the form], but rather in the matter that potentially receives both contraries. Thus, there is not a potentiality to persist and to corrupt in [the form] of the composite corruptible thing, and so they are not combined in it ... With the simple things that are in matter, the potentiality to corrupt is in the matter, not in their substance.[47]

In addition to the appearance of the term *aṣl*, the key phrase that links this passage to *Pointers* VII.6 is *fa-lam tajtamiʿ fī-hi*, which appears in the *Pointers* as *fa-lam yajtamiʿ fī-hā*. In the *Cure*, it is the potentiality for persistence and the potentiality for corruption that do not combine in the "causal factor" (*maʿnā*) that causes the composite to exist as one (namely, its form). In the *Pointers*, it is the simple accidents in which the potentiality to corrupt or endure does not combine. Both texts emphasize that this potentiality belongs to the matter (with which the form combines, and in which the accidents inhere).

The rational soul, as a fundamental principle, is not composite, but simple; nor is it susceptible to corruption. It independently has the capacity to intellect itself and to intellect the fact that it intellects itself. This is because it performs its function by itself and not through the aid of an instrument. Since it is not susceptible to corruption, and since it performs its function of intellection

47 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, IX, 104.8–105.4; *Avicenna's De Anima*, V.4, 232.9–233.1; trans. mod. from McGinnis and Reisman, *Classical Arabic Philosophy*, 198–199; *al-Najāt*, 226.19–227.3.

without the use of an instrument, when the body with which it has an association eventually dies, no harm comes to it. It persists, and its capability for intellection—for thinking and understanding the intelligibles—persists along with it in the afterlife.

2 Intellect and Intelligible Do Not Unite

Ibn Sīnā transitions from discussing how the intellect functions to addressing what happens when it functions: Does the intellect become one with the object of its intellection? He begins **VII.7** by referring to certain predecessors who believed just that.[48] Though it is obvious that Ibn Sīnā disagrees—why else label this section a "delusion" (*wahm*)?—he entertains the notion.

فلنفرض الجوهر العاقل عقل أ وكان هو على قولهم بعينه المعقول من أ فهل هو حينئذ كما كان عندما لم يعقل أ أو بطل منه ذلك فإن كان كما كان فسواء عقل أ أو لم يعقل

Let us assume that the intellecting substance intellects A and then, according to them, is precisely what has been intellected from A. Is it, at that moment, as it was when it was not intellecting A, or has that [aspect] of it ceased? If it is as it was, then it is the same [whether it] intellects A or not.[49]

The question here is whether, when the intellect thinks something, does it become that thing? And, if so, does anything about its prior self cease to be? Ibn Sīnā further wonders, if it does cease, in what manner:

أَبطل على أنّه حال له أو على أنّه ذاته فإن كان على أنّه حال له والذات باقية فهو كسائر الاستحالات ليس على ما يقولون وإن كان على أنّه ذاته فقد بطل ذاته وحدث شيء آخر ليس أنّه صار هو شيئاً آخر

...

Did it cease in terms of its state or in terms of its essence? It if is in terms of its state while its essence remains, then it is like all other transformations [and] not as they say. But if it is in terms of its essence, then its essence has perished and something else has come to be; it is not that it has become something else.

...

48 Ṭūsī does not specifically identify this group, saying only that they were well known Peripatetics who came after Aristotle; Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ*, 2:890.8–9.

49 *al-Išārāt*, VII.7, 325.2–4.

وأيضاً إذا عقل أ ثمّ عقل ب أيكون كما كان عندما عقل أ حتّى يكون سواء عقل ب أو لم يعقلها أو يصير شيئاً آخر ويلزم منه ما تقدّم ذكره

Furthermore, when it intellects A then intellects B, is it as it was when it intellected A such that it is the same whether it intellected B or not? Or does it become something else (from which would follow what has already been mentioned)?[50]

Through these questions, Ibn Sīnā draws out two interpretations of the assertion that when the intellect thinks something, it becomes that thing. Both are wrong, he says. If the intellect thinks Intelligible A and becomes Intelligible A, then thinks Intelligible B and becomes Intelligible B, either it has changed in terms of its state or its essence. If when thinking Intelligible B it remains as it was before when it was thinking Intelligible A, then no change has happened. If it were only its state that has changed, then this would be no different from any other change. But if it changed in terms of its essence, then this is no mere change. Since it now has a different essence, it has not just become something else (*ṣāra šayʾan āḫar*); rather, something entirely new has come to be (*ḥadaṯa šayʾun āḫar*). This, according to Ibn Sīnā, would "require a shared matter and the renewal of a compound, not a simple, substance."[51]

While the as-of-yet unnamed people to whom Ibn Sīnā alludes get much wrong, they do not get everything wrong. He acknowledges (**VII.9**) that they are correct when they say that when the rational soul intellects something, it does so through making contact with the active intellect. Nevertheless, they promptly return to their original error by saying that when the rational soul makes contact with the active intellect, "it becomes the same as the active intellect."[52]

After all this, Ibn Sīnā finally names a name: The primary target of his ire is the Neoplatonist philosopher Porphyry (d. 234 CE?).[53] Despite having written works on the intellect for which he received praise, neither Porphyry nor his readers had any idea what he was talking about (**VII.10**).

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50 VII.7–8, 325.5–11.

51 *yaqtaḍī hayūlā muštaraka wa-tajadduda murakkabin lā basīṭin*; VII.7, 325.8. Ibn Sīnā returns to the notion of change in VII.19.

52 *taṣīru hiya nafsa l-ʿaqli l-faʿʿāl*; VII.9, 325.15.

53 According to Sebti, there is no reason to attribute to Porphyry the thesis that Ibn Sīnā reports here; Sebti, "Distinction," 27n10. Adamson likewise warns that we should be skeptical of assuming that what Ibn Sīnā says here accurately portrays the contents of Porphyry's *On Intellect and the Intelligibles*. He argues that it is more likely that Ibn Sīnā is responding not to Porphyry but to the Christian Baghdad Peripatetics (Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī and his school); Adamson, "Porphyrius Arabus," 155–160. See also, summarizing Adamson, Üçer, "From Identity to Representation," 22–29, esp. 26–29.

There was a man among them known as Porphyry. He wrote a book *On Intellect and the Intelligibles*.[54] The Peripatetics praised it, even though it's all garbage.[55] They themselves even knew that they didn't understand it, nor did Porphyry, himself. A contemporary of his rebutted him [Porphyry]. Then he [Porphyry] rebutted the rebutter with [arguments] even dumber than the first.[56]

وكان لهم رجل يعرف بفرفريوس عمل في العقل والمعقولات كتاباً يثنى عليه المشّاؤون وهو حشف كلّه وهم يعلمون من أنفسهم أنّهم لا يفهمونه ولا فرفريوس نفسه وقد ناقضه من أهل زمانه رجل وناقض هو ذلك المناقَض بما هو أبسط من الأوّل

This is not the first time that Ibn Sīnā has expressed bewilderment with the idea that when the intellect thinks an intelligible it becomes an intelligible, nor is it the first time that he chastises Porphyry. Both sentiments also appear in the *Cure*.

The [rational] soul conceptualizes itself. Its conceptualization of itself makes it intellect, intellector, and intelligible. But its conceptualization of these [other] forms does not make it so. [This is] because its substance in the body is always a potential intellect, even if it becomes an actual [intellect] with regard to certain matters. What is said, namely that the soul itself becomes the intelligibles, is among the things that I say are impossible. I really don't understand their assertion that one thing becomes something else, nor can I comprehend how that would be.

...

والنفس تتصوّر ذاتها وتصوُّرها ذاتَها يجعلها عقلاً وعاقلاً ومعقولاً وأما تصوُّرها لهذه الصور فلا يجعلها كذلك فإنّها في جوهرها في البدن دائماً بالقوّة عقل وإن خرج في أمور ما إلى الفعل وما يقال من أنّ ذات النفس تصير هي المعقولات فهو من جملة ما يستحيل عندي فإنّي لست أفهم قولهم إنّ شيئاً يصير شيئاً آخر ولا أعقل أنّ ذلك كيف يكون

...

54 On the identity of this work, see Adamson, "Porphyrius Arabus," 155.

55 *ḥašaf* means the worst kind of dates: dry, hard, rotten, without flavor; Lane and Lane-Poole, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 1968, 2:576. Cf. Adamson's "drivel;" "Porphyrius Arabus," 155.

56 *al-Išārāt*, VII.10, 326.7–11. According to Gutas, this is the only instance in which Ibn Sīnā explicitly names a prior philosopher in the *Pointers*; Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 329.

He who has most confused people in this matter is the one who composed the *Isagoge* for them. He was bent on pronouncing imaginative, poetic, and Sufi statements in which he contented himself, for himself and for others, to the Imagination.[57]

وأكثر ما هوّس الناس في هذا هو الذي صنّف لهم إيساغوجي وكان حريصاً على أن يتكلّم بأقوال مخيّلة شعريّة صوفيّة يقتصر منها لنفسه ولغيره على التخيّل

The one and only circumstance in which it could possibly be said that the intellect becomes the object of its intellection is when it thinks of itself, in which it is simultaneously intellect, intellector, and object of intellection.[58] This is not the same as saying that the intellect always becomes the object of its intellection, an assertion which dumbfounds Ibn Sīnā. Despite saying he cannot understand how this would work, he considers how it might: "If it is like [the intellect] takes off one form and then puts on another, then it is not actually that the first thing becomes the second thing. Rather, the first thing ceases, with only its subject or some part of it remaining."[59] This language of taking off (*yaḫla'*) one form and donning another (*yalbis*), ceasing (*baṭala*) and coming-to-be (*ḥadaṯa*, *ḥaṣala*) reappears in the *Pointers*, as we will see.

Continuing his allusion to Porphyry and his ancient contemporaries (or, more likely, the Christian Baghdad Peripatetics), Ibn Sīnā explains what he meant by the intellect becoming the object of its intellection (**VII.11**):

57 *Avicenna's De Anima*, V.6, 239.7–12, 240.3–5.

58 Ibn Sīnā also says as much in his commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima*: "Those who say that the intellect, intellector, and intelligible are one thing are correct only with the intellect, whereas in other [circumstances], the intellect is a thing, the intellector is [another] thing, the intelligible is [another] thing, and the intellect's conceptualization of the intelligible is [yet another] thing" (*alladī yaqūlūna min anna l-ʿaqla wa-l-ʿāqila wa-l-maʿqūla šayʾun wāḥidun yaṣiḥḥu fī l-ʿaqli waḥdahu wa-fī ġayrihi l-ʿaqlu šayʾun wa-l-ʿāqilu šayʾun wa-l-maʿqūlu šayʾun wa-taṣawwuru l-ʿaqli li-l-maʿqūli šayʾun*); "*Commentary on the* Theology of Aristotle," 105.16–18. Sebti clarifies that by intellect Ibn Sīnā here means the separate intellects of the celestial realm, such as the active intellect (this modifies an earlier reading in which she asserted this could only be a reference to the active intellect). It seems to me that this also applies to the human intellect when it thinks of itself. See Sebti's discussions of Ibn Sīnā's rejection of Porphyry and the possibility of the human soul uniting with the active intellect in the process of intellection in Sebti, *Avicenne*, 78–80; and "Distinction," 26–32.

59 *fa-in kāna bi-an yaḫlaʿa ṣūratan ṯumma yalbisu ṣūratan uḫrā fa-lam yaṣir bi-l-ḥaqīqati l-šayʾu l-awwalu l-šayʾa l-ṯāniya bali l-šayʾu l-awwalu qad baṭala wa-inna-mā baqiya mawḍūʿuhu aw juzʾun min-hu*; *Avicenna's De Anima*, V.6, 239.12–15.

اعلم أنّ قول القائل إنّ شيئاً ما يصير شيئاً آخر لا على سبيل الاستحالة من حال إلى حال ولا على سبيل التركيب مع شيء آخر ليحدث منهما شيء ثالث بل على أنّه كان شيئاً واحداً فصار واحداً آخر قولٌ شعريٌّ غير معقول

Know that the statement of him who says, "Something becomes something else, not by means of transformation of one state into another, nor by means of combination with something else so that a third thing comes to be from the two of them, but rather that it was one thing and then became something else" is an unintelligible, poetic statement.[60]

Here, Ibn Sīnā tells us with a little more detail how to understand the assertion that the intellect becomes the object of its intellection. It does not merely change its state (something Ibn Sīnā considered and discounted in VII.7). Nor does it combine with that intelligible and become a third, compound entity. Instead, it simply was one thing, then became another. He categorizes this as a poetic argument which he condemns as "unintelligible," a condemnation that he also uses in the relevant discussion in the *Cure* (see below). He explains why this is so in the remainder of this section (I have added the numbers to help follow the argument).

فإنّه إن كان كلّ واحد من الأمرين موجوداً فهما اثنان متميّزان وإن كان أحدهما غير موجود فقد بطل إن كان المعدوم قبل وحدث شيء آخر أو لم يحدث أن كان المفروض ثانياً ومُصيِّراً إيّاه وإن كان معدومين فلم يصر أحدهما الآخر بل إنّما يجوز أن يقال إنّ الماء صار هواءً على أنّ الموضوع للمائيّة خلع المائيّة ولبس الهوائيّة وما يجري هذا المجرى

[This is] because if [1] each of the two things exists, then they are two distinct things. But if [2] one of them does not exist, then it becomes untenable—if the non-existent was [existent] prior [to the union] and then something else did or did not come to exist—for what is assumed [to be non-existent] to be a second [thing] and a cause of it. And [3] if the two are nonexistent, then one does not become the other. Rather, it is permissible to say only that water became air insofar as the subject of being-water divested itself of "water-ness" and dressed itself in "air-ness," and the like.[61]

60 *al-Išārāt*, VII.11, 326.13–327.1.

61 VII.11, 327.1–7. This challenging passage, with awkward syntax and numerous variants, is a supreme example of the need for a critical edition of the *Pointers*. As it appears (with some differences) in Zārīʿī's and Forget's editions, it requires multiple asyndetic clauses. While not impossible, I believe this reading to be improbable and forced. I omit *allaḏī kāna mawjūdan* after *baṭala*, following Zārīʿī's witnesses *alif* (MS Tehran Majlis-i Šūrā-yi Islāmī

The first possibility is clear both in its exposition and conclusion: if, after the intellect thinks an intelligible, both remain, then they continue to be two distinct existents; it cannot be said that the one has become the other. What follows becomes less clear, which is borne out by the many variant readings attested for it. If, instead of both intellect and intelligible continuing to exist, only one of them—the intelligible—continues to exist, then one cannot claim that the once-but-no-longer existent intellect is both a part of the second thing and a cause of that second thing. Instead of this unintelligible nonsense, what one can say is that, for example, when water becomes air, the subject that hosts water-ness takes off its water-ness and puts on air-ness. Ibn Sīnā presents the same scenario, albeit in a more straightforward manner, in the *Cure* (as before, I have added the numbers to help follow the argument).

5085) and *dāl* (MS Maktabat Ayāt Allāh al-Marʿašī al-Najafī 6525); Forget's witnesses C (MS Leiden Warn. 1062), D (MS Berlin Wetzstein II 1242), and H (MS Oxford Pococke 107).

As my translation indicates, I read *an kāna* as the subject of *baṭala*. Āmulī, in his edition of Ṭūsī's commentary on the *Pointers*, also argues that omitting *allaḏī kāna mawjūdan*, and reading *an kāna* as the subject of *baṭala*, is correct (Ṭūsī similarly agrees); Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ*, 2:898n3, 899n1, 900. The sentence is easier to follow when rearranged so that the apodosis follows the protasis: *in kāna l-maʿdūmu qablu wa-ḥadaṯa šayʾun āḫaru aw lam yaḥduṯ baṭala an kāna l-mafrūḍu ṯāniyan wa-muṣayyiran iyyā-hu* ("If the non-existent [existed] prior [to the union] and something else comes to be, or does not, it is untenable for what is assumed [to be non-existent] to be a second thing and a cause of it"). As Ṭūsī explains, *an* is used here as *an al-maṣdariyya*, and so *an kāna* can be replaced with *kawn*, yielding *baṭala kawnu l-mafrūḍi ṯāniyan*. Including the phrase *allaḏī kāna mawjūdan*, as Zārīʿī and Forget both do, makes that phrase the subject of *baṭala*. This has several consequences: 1) it requires reading *in kāna l-maʿdūmu* as the start of a new sentence, with no conjunction; this then 2) disconnects *an kāna l-mafrūḍu* from *baṭala*, making it an orphaned clause and 3) turning it from a negative ("untenable … to be") to a positive, which goes against the sense of the phrase, even if we supply it with a conjunction (like *fa-*, as some manuscripts do) to fix its orphaned state. Goichon both includes *allaḏī kāna mawjūdan* and appears to read *an* with *bi-* (the former agrees with Forget's edition, the latter does not), which yields: "If the one thing is non-existent, that which existed was reduced to nothing. If that which no longer is, existed previously, something else comes to be; or does not come to be, since a second thing is assumed, cause of the first's becoming;" Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 449. Adamson's translation relies on Dunyā's edition, which excludes *allaḏī kāna mawjūdan*. It is similar to Goichon's, as he does not read *an kāna* as the subject of *baṭala*, but differs from Goichon's insofar as he appears to read حدث and يحدث as Form II ("brought … into existence"). This would be an uncommon use of that form; Adamson, "Porphyrius Arabus," 156. Inati reads the sentence as I do; Inati, *Physics and Metaphysics*, 171. While I, Adamson, and Goichon read *muṣayyir iyyā-hu* as active, Dunyā reads it as passive (as Ṭūsī appears to, as well). Adamson (159) also translates a passage from Ibn ʿAdī, which may have inspired Ibn Sīnā's condemnation, in which *maṣīr iyyā-hu* appears; Dunyā (1966), *al-Išārāt*, 3:273.5. As for the correct reading for this passage as a whole, until we have proper edition, *Allāhu aʿlam*.

If one thing becomes something else, it either —since it has become that [other] thing—is [1] existent or [2] non-existent. If [1] it is existent, then the other, second [thing] is either [1.a] also existent or [1.b] non-existent. If [1.a] it is existent, then they are two existents, not one. But if [1.b] it is non-existent, then this existent thing has become something non-existent, not another existent thing. This is unintelligible. But if the first [thing] became non-existent [2], then it did not become something else. Instead, it ceased to exist and something else came to be. So how can the soul become the forms of things?[62]

إذا صار الشيء شيئاً آخر فإمّا أن يكون إذ هو قد صار ذلك الشيء موجوداً أو معدوماً فإن كان موجوداً فالثاني الآخر إمّا أن يكون موجوداً أيضاً أو معدوماً فإن كان موجوداً فهما موجودانِ لا موجود واحد وإن كان معدوماً فقد صار هذا الموجود شيئاً معدوماً لا شيئاً آخر موجوداً وهذا غير معقول وإن كان الأوّل قد عدم فما صار شيئاً آخر بل عدم هو وحصل شيء آخر فالنفس كيف تصير صور الأشياء

Conclusion 1.a in the *Cure* aligns precisely with the first proposition that Ibn Sīnā considers in the *Pointers*: namely, when the intellect is said to become the intelligible, if both continue to exist, then there remain two distinct existents; one did not become the other. The next option (1.b) is that when the intellect becomes the intelligible, the intelligible ceases to exist. Ibn Sīnā excluded this option from his discussion of this topic in the *Pointers*.[63] What remains is that something existent (the intellect) has become something non-existent (the intelligible), which Ibn Sīnā rightly ridicules as unintelligible, using the same judgment (*ġayr maʿqūl*) that he does in the *Pointers*.

In no way, then, can it accurately be said that when the intellect thinks an intelligible, it becomes that thing.[64] The only exception to this rule is an intellect which is the very object of its own intellection. Ibn Sīnā concludes this topic with a transitional, summative section (**VII.12**): "It has become apparent to you from this that everything that intellects is an existent entity in which abide manifest intellectual truths in a way that one thing abides in another."[65]

62 *Avicenna's De Anima*, V.6, 239.16–240.3.

63 According to Ṭūsī, Ibn Sīnā excluded it because it is an obvious contradiction; Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ*, 2:900.2–3.

64 This has severe implications for the argument that Ibn Sīnā maintained the possibility of mystical union between the human soul and the divine, which I will address in chapter 5.

65 *fa-yaẓharu la-ka min hāḏā anna kulla mā yaʿqilu fa-inna-hu ḏātun mawjūdatun tataqarraru fī-hā l-jalāyā l-ʿaqliyyatu taqarrura šayʾin fī šayʾin āḫar*; *al-Išārāt*, VII.12, 327.9–10.

3 God's Knowledge of Particulars

After establishing that the intellect does not unite with the objects of its intellection, Ibn Sīnā introduces the two ways in which intellectual forms can be acquired: they can either originate in and be acquired from the extra-mental world, or they can originate in the intellect and then become actual in the extra-mental world (**VII.13**). As an example of the former, he mentions how "we acquire the form of the sky from the sky."[66] For the latter, he mentions how "we think of a form, then we make it an existent."[67] This manner applies to the Necessary Existent (*wājib al-wujūd*) and Its knowledge of the universe (*al-kull*). It must be so that the universe first existed as an object of the Necessary Existent's intellection without any extra-mental existence, which then became real in the extra-mental world. It would be absurd—as Rāzī says in his commentary on the *Pointers*—for it to have been otherwise.[68] Ibn Sīnā expresses similar views on God's creative self-knowledge in some of his earliest texts, including *Provenance and Destination* and *Guidance*.

Provenance and Destination

He does not intellect things because they exist; rather, things exist because He has intellected them.[69]

ليس يعقل الأشياء لأنّها موجودة بل توجد الأشياء لأنّه يعقلها

Guidance

Since He knows His essence, He knows that all existence comes from Him. From His essence, He knows every existent, universal and particular, in a universal way.[70]

ولأنّه يعلم ذاته فيعلم أنّ عنه كلّ وجود فيعلم عن ذاته كلّ وجود كلّيّ وجزئيّ بنوع كلّيّ

In the following section of the *Pointers* (**VII.14**), Ibn Sīnā adds that each of these two ways may occur due to an intellectual cause which conceives of the form. This intellectual cause may conceive of the form as already having concrete existence, or it may conceive of it as not yet existing, but in a substance capable

66 *nastafīd ṣūrata l-samā'i mina l-samā'i*; VII.13, 327.13. Adamson translates all of VII.13, and discusses responses from Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī in "Avicenna and His Commentators," 114.

67 *na'qilu šaklan ṯumma naj'aluhu mawjūdan*; *al-Išārāt*, VII.13, 327.14.

68 Rāzī, *Šarḥ*, 2:534.8–9.

69 *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*, I.23, 32.4–5.

70 *al-Hidāya*, III.2, 266.2–3. Translations of the Metaphysics of *Guidance* appear in Lizzini, "Metafisica"; and III.6 in Michot, "Eschatologie."

of receiving intelligible forms. The significance of these two sections becomes apparent in the conclusion of VII.14. Ibn Sīnā observes that for an intellectual substance, the intellectual cause which conceives it can be itself; otherwise, there would be an endless chain of separate intellects, each one conceiving of another. Most importantly, this is necessarily the case for the Necessary Existent. If it were not so, then the Necessary Existent would no longer be necessary by itself, as it would rely on an external intellectual cause to first conceive of it; which, in turn, would itself require such a cause, and so on *ad infinitum* (*ilā ġayri l-nihāya*).[71]

Ibn Sīnā makes a similar statement in the *Cure*, which also appears in the *Salvation*:

وكلّ من تفكّر قليلاً علم أن العاقل يقتضي شيئاً معقولاً وهذا الاقتضاء لا يتضمّن أنّ ذلك الشيء آخر أو هو ... فإنّا نعلم علماً يقيناً أنّ لنا قوّة نعقل بها الأشياء فإمّا أن تكون القوّة التي نعقل بها هذه القوّة هي هذه القوّة نفسها فتكون هي نفسها تعقل ذاتها أو تعقل ذلك قوّة أخرى فتكون لنا قوّتان قوّة نعقل الأشياء بها وقوّة نعقل بها هذه القوّة ثمّ يتسلسل الكلام إلى غير النهاية ... فقد فهمت أنّ نفس كونه معقولاً وعاقلاً لا يوجب أن يكون اثنين في الذات ولا اثنين في الاعتبار أيضاً

Whoever thinks just a little knows that the [existence of the] intellector requires [the existence of] an intelligible. This requirement does not imply that the thing be something else or itself ... For we know with certainty that we have a faculty by which we intellect things. The faculty with which we intellect this faculty is either this very faculty itself—in which case it itself intellects itself—or else some other faculty intellects this, in which case we have two faculties: one by which we intellect things and one by which we intellect this [former] faculty, the discourse regressing infinitely ... From this you understand that His being both an intelligible and an intellector does not necessitate that there be two things in His essence, nor also two things in terms of consideration.[72]

In this passage from the *Cure* and *Salvation*, Ibn Sīnā addresses together ideas that he expresses separately in the *Pointers*: that the intellect necessarily functions without a corporeal instrument, otherwise for the intellect to be aware

71 Adamson likens this to Ibn Sīnā's regress argument for God's very existence; "Avicenna and His Commentators," 115.

72 Trans. mod. from *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.6, 285.14–286.17; *al-Najāt*, 280.20–281.14.

of itself and its own activity would require an infinite chain of other intellects; and that the Necessary Existent can be both intellect and intelligible without undermining its absolute simplicity.

Ibn Sīnā has thus established that the Necessary Existent is both the first cause and uncaused (or, more precisely following what he says here, self-caused). This paves the way for addressing the nature of the Necessary Existent's knowledge—both universal and particular—of everything in existence. He first addresses the Necessary Existent's self-knowledge (**VII.15**):

واجب الوجود يجب أن يعقل ذاته بذاته على ما تحقّق ويعقل ما بعده من حيث هو علّة لما بعده ومنه وجوده ويعقل سائر الأشياء من حيث وجوبها في سلسلة الترتيب النازل من عنده طولاً وعرضاً

The Necessary Existent must know Its essence on Its own (on the basis of what has already been established[73]) and know what is after It insofar as It is the cause of what is after It and that its existence is from It. [It is necessary that] It know the rest of [all] things insofar as they are necessary in a chain of sequential order that descends from It far and wide.[74]

In the beginning of *Pointers* VII, Ibn Sīnā commands his reader to consider the order in which existence began: emanating from the noblest and continuing on to the basest (prime matter) until ascending once again to the height of the acquired intellect. Here, he refers to this chain of sequential order of created beings to argue that the Necessary Existent necessarily knows them insofar as It, the creator and cause of all things, sits at the chain's origin.

Not only does the Necessary Existent have knowledge of all things, the manner in which It attains things and is the object of attainment is the most super-

73 Ṭūsī observes that this is a reference to *Pointers* IV; Goichon, Inati, Zārīʿī, and Āmulī further specify that it refers to IV.28, wherein Ibn Sīnā states that the First is both intellector and object of Its own intellection; Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ*, 2:907.1–2; *al-Išārāt*, 328, note marked with an asterisk; Inati, *Physics and Metaphysics*, 173n20; Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 451n4. This pointer, itself, is an allusion to what Ibn Sīnā establishes in *Pointers* III, in which he states, "Everything that intellects something can intellect its own self" (*fa-kullu mā yaʿqilu šay'an fa-la-hu an yaʿqila ḏātahu*); *al-Išārāt*, III.19, 250.3.

74 *al-Išārāt*, VII.15, 328.9–11. Marmura characterizes the reference to "far and wide" (or, in his translation, "vertically and horizontally") as referring to "permanent objects of knowledge, the genera and species," (far/vertical) and "existents in the temporal process" (wide/horizontal); Marmura, "Some Aspects," 302. Zghal, relying on Ibn Sīnā's use of "depth" (*ʿumq*) and "breadth" (*ʿarḍ*) in the Categories of the *Cure*, claims that "far" ("depth") refers to degrees of substance, while "wide" ("breadth") refers to relations between primary substances; Zghal, "Connaissance," 704n48.

ior (**VII.16**).[75] Put differently, as the cause of all things, Its knowledge of all things is perfect. As a perfect being, Its knowledge of Its self is also perfect. Following down the chain of creation, the manner in which the intellectual substances attain things—by means of illumination (*išrāq*) from the Necessary Existent—is second best. Farther down the chain are the attainments of the human rational soul, which Ibn Sīnā characterizes as "engravings and marks from an intellectual imprint of disparate principles and relations."[76] Adamson points out that God's intellective knowledge is superior to all others because only God's intellection is entirely self-intellection; for all other beings, be they celestial or human intellects, intellection includes intellecting not only the self, but also God and His creation.[77]

Ibn Sīnā interrupts his discussion of the nature of the Necessary Existent's knowledge to address a possible criticism: namely, if it really is the case that the intellect does not unite with the object of its intellection, and given that the Necessary Existent knows all things, how does this not introduce a multiplicity into what should be absolute unity (**VII.17**)? His response is that this multiplicity is neither internal to nor a constituent of the Necessary Existent's essence, but is an implicate (*lāzim*)[78] of the Necessary Existent's creative self-knowledge.

When It intellects Itself through Itself, it follows [from] Its self-subsistence as an intellect that sustains all things by Itself and through Itself that It intellects multiplicity. The multiplicity arrives as an implicate that is posterior to Its essence, neither internal to nor a constituent part of it. It also arrives in a certain sequential order. A multiplicity of implicates from the self—whether distinct or

إنّه لمّا كان يعقل ذاته بذاته ثمّ يلزم قيّوميّته عقلاً بذاته لذاته أن يعقل الكثرة جاءت الكثرة لازمةً متأخّرةً لا داخلةً في الذات مقوّمةً وجاءت أيضاً على ترتيب وكثرةُ اللوازم من الذات مباينة أو غير مباينة لا تثلم الوحدة والأوّل تعرض له كثرة لوازم إضافيّة وغير إضافيّة وكثرة سلوب

75 Ibn Sīnā returns to this idea in *Pointers* VIII.18 when ranking existents based on the perfection of their attainment and the joy that they subsequently experience.

76 *naqšun wa-rašmun ʿan ṭābiʿin ʿaqliyyin mutabaddidu l-mabādiʾi wa-l-manāsib*; *al-Išārāt*, VII.16, 329.1–2.

77 Adamson also translates VII.16; Adamson, "Avicenna and His Commentators," 115.

78 I do not follow the common translation of *lāzim* as "concomitant." Concomitance involves a reciprocal relationship, while *luzūm* involves a non-symmetric relationship. My thanks to Tony Street for explaining this to me. Ricardo Strobino contrasts *lāzim* with *muqawwim* ("constituent"). He characterizes *lāzim* as "any necessary attribute of something … The term "implicate" typically designates non-constitutive necessary attributes;" Strobino, *Avicenna's Theory of Science*, 185.

not—does not impair unity. There occurs to the First a multiplicity of relative and non-relative implicates, as well as a multiplicity of negations; and, because of that, a multiplicity of names. But that has no effect on the unicity of Its essence.[79]

وبسبب ذلك كثرة الأسماء لكنّ لا تأثير لذلك في وحدانيّة ذاته

The First's essence (*ḏāt*) is purely intellectual. Ibn Sīnā explains in the *Cure* that this is so because the First's essence "is dissociated from matter in every respect."[80] Not only is the First an intellect, but its absolute dissociation from matter also makes it an intelligible. This leads Ibn Sīnā to declare that the First's "essence is intellect, intellector, and intelligible (not that there are multiple things here)."[81] In response to the argument that the First's knowledge of multiplicity inserts multiplicity into Its essence, he responds in the *Pointers* that this knowledge is an implicate (*lāzim*) of the First's knowledge of Its essence and Its creation. As an implicate, it is posterior (causally speaking) to Its essence, even though the First's knowledge is eternal and unchanging. Ibn Sīnā remarks that the knowledge arrives in a certain sequential order. This is, of course, the order of creation, to which he alludes several times in this chapter. Lastly, Ibn Sīnā alludes to God's beautiful names (*asmāʾ allāh al-ḥusnā*), which he says result from the multiplicity of the relative and non-relative consequents and negations in relation to the First.[82] He makes similar arguments when defending the First's unity despite His knowledge of particulars in the Metaphysics of the *Elements*, *Cure*, and *Salvation*:

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79 *al-Išārāt*, VII.17, 329.7–13. Cf. translation and discussion in Griffel, *Formation*, 405–406; and Adamson, "Avicenna and His Commentators," 117. Whereas Griffel translates *qayyūmiyyatuhu* as "repository" or "vessel," I understand it, similarly to Adamson, as "self-subsistent by whom all things subsist."

80 *li-anna ḏātahu mufāriqatun li-l-māddati min-kulli wajhin*; trans. from *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.6, 284.17; Adamson translates the relevant passage in "Avicenna and His Commentators," 113–114. Ibn Sīnā says much the same in *Guidance*: "Since He is free from matter, He is essentially intelligible" (*wa-li-anna-hu mutajarridun ʿani l-māddati fa-huwa maʿqūlun bi-ḏātihi*); *al-Hidāya*, III.2, 263.5.

81 *fa-ḏātuhu ʿaqlun wa-āqilun wa-maʿqūlun lā anna-hu hunāka ašyāʾu mutakaṯṯiratun*; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.6, 285.6–7.

82 Adamson discusses how Rāzī, in his commentary on the *Pointers*, argues based on VII.17 and Ibn Sīnā's reference to God's names that here he articulates a position that aligns better with the ʿAšʿarīs than the *falāsifa* on the question of divine attributes; Adamson, "Avicenna and His Commentators," 117. Rāzī makes a similar claim in his *Eastern Investigations*; see Griffel, *Formation*, 407.

Elements

As for Its essence, it does not contain multiplicity, as you know, due to states and attributes. Nor is it impossible that It has a multiplicity of relations and a multiplicity of negations, and there is pronounced for It a name educed in accordance with each relation and another name educed in accordance with each negation.[83]

وأمّا ذاته فلا تتكثّر كما علمت بالأحوال والصفات ولا يمتنع أن تكون له كثرة إضافات وكثرة سلوب وأن يجعل له بحسب كلّ إضافة اسم محصّل وبحسب كلّ سلب اسم محصّل

Cure

We mean by our saying that It is absolutely one in essence and does not become multiple that it is as such in [Its] essence. If, then, many positive and negative relations become attendant on It, these are implicates of the essence, caused by the essence, exist after the existence of the essence, and are not constituents or parts of it.[84]

نعني بقولنا إنّه وحدانيّ الذات لا يتكثّر أنّه كذلك في الذات ثمّ إن تبعَتْ إضافاتٌ إجابيّة وسلبيّة كثيرة فتلك لوازم للذات معلولة للذات توجد بعد وجود الذات وليست مقوّمة للذات ولا أجزاء لها

Cure, *Salvation*

It is not possible for the Necessary Existent to know things from [those very] things. If it were so, then Its essence would be either constituted by what it knows, so it would subsist through [these] things; or, it would be accidental that it knows [these things], so it would not be the Necessary of Existent in all respects … Since It is the principle of all existence, It intellects from Its essence that of which It is the principle.[85]

وليس يجوز أن يكون واجب الوجود يعقل الأشياء من الأشياء وإلّا فذاته إمّا متقوّمة بما يعقل فيكون تقوّمها بالأشياء وإمّا عارضة لها أن تعقل فلا تكون واجب الوجود من كلّ جهة … ولأنّه مبدأ كلّ وجود فيعقل من ذاته ما هو مبدأ له

The preceding passages connect the many arguments that Ibn Sīnā has made so far in this chapter: the intellect is incorporeal and absolutely simple; the intellect acts on its own, without the aid of a corporeal instrument; the Necessary

83 *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 58.22–59.3.

84 Trans. mod. from *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.4, 273.16–18.

85 VIII.6, 287.3–8; *al-Najāt*, 283.2–7.

Existent is both intellect, intellector, and object of its own intellection; the intellect does not unite with the objects of its intellection; objects of intellection can first have only mental existence and then be created in the extra-mental world, which is how all existence proceeds from the Necessary Existent; and being the cause of other things does not sully the Necessary Existent with multiplicity. This leaves the question of how the Necessary Existent can have knowledge of all other existents without that compromising Its simplicity.

In the following section of the *Pointers* (**VII.18**), Ibn Sīnā further elaborates how the Necessary Existent can have knowledge of particular things, even if that knowledge is not the same as knowledge acquired through particular and temporal acts of attainment (*ġayr al-idrāk al-juzʾī l-zamānī*).

الأشياء الجزئيّة قد تُعقل كما تُعقل الكلّيّات من حيث تجب بأسبابها منسوبة إلى مبدأ نوعه في شخصه تتخصّص به

Particular things may be intellected just as universals are intellected, insofar as they become necessary through their causes [and are] linked to a principle whose species is comprised of its individual by which they [the particular things] become individuated.[86]

Ibn Sīnā says much the same in the *Cure* and *Salvation*, albeit with more elaboration:

إذا عقل ذاته وعقل أنّه مبدأ كلّ موجود عقل أوائل الموجودات عنه وما يتولّد عنها ولا شيء من الأشياء يوجد إلّا وقد صار من جهة ما واجباً بسببه وقد بيّنا هذا فتكون هذه الأسباب يتأدّى بمصادماتها إلى أن توجد عنها الأمور الجزئيّة والأوّل يعلم الأسباب ومطابقاتها فيعلم ضرورة ما يتأدّى إليها وما بينها من الأزمنة وما لها من العودات لأنّه ليس يمكن أن يعلم تلك ولا يعلم هذا

When It intellects Its essence and intellects that It is the principle of every existent, It intellects the principles of the existents [that proceed] from It and what is generated by them. No existent thing is not in some manner necessitated by It [as its] cause—this we have shown. The collisions of these causes result in the existence of particular things. The First knows the causes and their correspondences. It thus necessarily knows to what these lead, the time [intervals] between them, and their recurrences, for it is not possible that It knows that and not this.

86 *al-Išārāt*, VII.18, 329.14–330.1.

It thus attains particular things insofar as they are universal—I mean, insofar as they have attributes. If these [attributes] become specified individually by them [particulars], [this takes place] in relation to an individuated time or an individuated circumstance. If this circumstance were [simply] apprehended with its attributes, it would be in the same position as [the particulars]. But, insofar as [these attributes] depend on principles where the species of each is [confined] to its individual instance, they depend on individual things.[87]

فيكون مدركاً للأمور الجزئيّة من حيث هي كلّيّة أعني من حيث لها صفات وإن تخصّصت بها شخصاً فبالإضافة إلى زمان متشخّص أو حال متشخّصة لو أخذت تلك الحال بصفاتها كانت أيضاً بمنزلتها لكنّها تستند إلى مبادئ كلّ واحد منها نوعه في شخصه فتستند إلى أمور شخصيّة

As in the *Pointers*, here in the *Cure* and the *Salvation*, Ibn Sīnā declares that the First, Necessary Existent knows particular things insofar as It is their primary cause.[88] As the cosmic sequence of causation unfolds, the Necessary Existent knows each cause and its corresponding relations; in other words, It knows its effects, down to their specific time and place. Though the terminology—especially "recurrences"—seems specifically attuned to celestial things and events,[89] Ibn Sīnā further emphasizes in the *Cure* and *Salvation* that this applies to the lower realm by alluding to the Qur'ān (10:61) that "not [even] the weight of an atom in the heavens or the earth escapes Him."[90]

Ibn Sīnā then qualifies the nature of God's knowledge by stating that particulars can be known universally insofar as they are linked to a species comprised of only a single individual.[91] Though Ibn Sīnā does not elaborate on this in the

87 Trans. mod. from *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.6, 288.6–13; *al-Najāt*, 283.24–284.9.

88 Elsewhere, Ibn Sīnā remarks that in the supernal realm, "each particular is perceived there in a way that is an implicate of its causes. This way makes the particular universal;" (*wa-kullu juz'iyyin fa-inna-hu mudrakun hunāka ʿalā l-jihati llatī lazimat min asbābihi wa-hiya jihatun tajʿalu l-juz'iyya kulliyyan*); "*Commentary on the* Theology of Aristotle," 48.17–18.

89 Zghal, "Connaissance," 693.

90 *wa-lā yaʿzubu ʿan-hu miṯqālu ḏarratin fī l-samawāti wa-lā fī l-arḍ*; Trans. from *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.6, 288.3; *al-Najāt*, 283.20–21. He similarly alludes to Q 10:61 when discussing the particular knowledge of the celestial souls in *Lesser Destination*; *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XIII, 115.5–6.

91 Marmura argues that this means that God can have universal knowledge of a particular only when that particular is the sole member of its species. This would entail that God can have knowledge of the celestial particulars, but not of any sublunary particulars; Marmura, "Some Aspects," 310–311. Adamson challenges Marmura, claiming that while God can know the celestial species and possibly that they have only one member, He still

Pointers, he provides an example in the *Cure* and *Salvation*: the spheres of the sun and Jupiter are both examples of individual instantiations of a species. As Goichon notes in her translation of the *Pointers*, this is the case for each of the celestial entities.[92] A brief review of Ibn Sīnā's emanative system of creation may clarify this.[93] God, as the Necessary Existent, is purely and absolutely one. This Ibn Sīnā has made clear. According to what came to be known as Ibn Sīnā's "Rule of One" (*qāʿidat al-wāḥid*), "From the one, insofar as it is one, exists only one [thing]."[94] Since, as he insists, plurality cannot come from God's simplicity, only one thing results from God's creative self-knowledge: the first created intellect. This intellect has knowledge 1) of God as the Necessary Existent, 2) of its own existence as being necessary through God, and 3) of its own existence as being only possible in itself. These three acts of intellection result in the creation of three things: an intellect, a soul, and sphere (body) associated with them. The celestial spheres—like the sun and Jupiter, and ending with the moon (which is the active intellect)—represent species which consist of a single individual. As such, God has direct knowledge of them as individuals. Since the celestial spheres are eternal and unchanging, God's direct knowledge of them is likewise eternal and unchanging.[95]

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cannot have knowledge of the accidents that belong to that individual. Adamson argues that Marmura misunderstands what Ibn Sīnā means by knowledge, namely that knowledge must be certain, and certainty can pertain only to unchanging, universal truths. This would mean that no intellect, be it the Necessary Existent or a human intellect, has knowledge of particulars; Adamson, "On Knowledge of Particulars," 286n5 and 291.

92 *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.6, 288.16–17; *al-Najāt*, 284.12–13; Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 454n2. Goichon's example speaks specifically to each intellect, while Marmura speaks of each sphere. Both are accurate observations, as Marmura observes that sphere, soul, and intellect belong to a different species and each is the only member of that species.

93 What follows is a summary of Marmura's own summary of Ibn Sīnā's emanative system and its relation to God's knowledge of particulars; Marmura, "Some Aspects," 305. See also, Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect*, 74–76.

94 *anna l-wāḥida min ḥayṯu huwa wāḥidun inna-mā yūjadu ʿan-hu wāḥidun*; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.4, 330.1–2. This was rendered in Latin as *ex uno non fit nisi unum*. For studies on emanation and Ibn Sīnā's "Rule of One" and its reception, see Lizzini, "Ibn Sina's Metaphysics," § 5.4; Amin, "'From the One, Only One Proceeds'"; D'Ancona, "Ex uno"; Hyman, "From What Is One"; and Heer, "Al-Rāzī and al-Ṭūsī on Ibn Sīnā's Theory of Emanation."

95 As the celestial motions—what Ibn Sīnā calls "the collision of these causes"—result in the creation of particular things in the sublunar word of generation and corruption, the celestial souls have knowledge of past, present, and future events in the earthly realm (the importance of this to Ibn Sīnā will become clear in the next chapters).

To illustrate his point further, Ibn Sīnā refers to knowledge of a particular eclipse, which can be acquired through comprehensive knowledge of its causes.[96] First, the *Pointers*:

كالكسوف الجزئيّ فإنّه قد يُعقل وقوعه بسبب توافي أسبابه الجزئيّة وإحاطة العقل بها وتعقّلها كما تُعقل الكلّيّات

[This is] like the particular eclipse. Its occurrence is known because of the complete nature of its particular causes, the intellect's comprehension of them, and their being intellected, just as universals are.[97]

Ibn Sīnā regularly called upon the example of the eclipse to clarify what he means by universal knowledge of particulars:

Guidance

فأمّا كيفيّة إدراك الجزئيّ كلّيّاً والجزئيّ جزئيّاً ... هو أنّك تعلم أنّه كيف يكون كلّ كسوف في أيّ مدّة يكون وفي مدّة كذا كم يكون وأنّه بعد أيّ كسوف يكون ولو نصبتَ آلةً تتحرّك فيكون عنها أمور لعلمتَ أنّ كلّ واحد منها يكون وأنّه بعد أيّه يكون وكنتَ دائماً فيه على حكم واحد لا يتغيّر

As for how [one can have] attainment of particulars in a universal way and of particulars in a particular way... it is that you know how every eclipse will occur—during what time they will occur, during what time how many will occur, and after which [other] eclipse they will occur. If you were to create a moving instrument from which things would proceed, you would know that each one of them exists, and after which [other] one it exists. You would, in this regard, always have one, invariable judgment.[98]

Cure/Salvation

كما أنّك تعلم حركات السماويّات كلّها فأنت تعلم كلّ كسوف وكلّ اتّصال وكلّ انفصال جزئيّ يكون بعينه ولكنّ على نحو كلّيّ

...

As you know all of the celestial movements, you then also know all particular eclipses, conjunctions, and disjunctions in their individual existence, but in a universal way.

...

96 The example of the eclipse also appears in Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* I.8; Adamson, "On Knowledge of Particulars," 276.

97 *al-Išārāt*, VII.18, 329.14–330.2.

98 *al-Hidāya*, III.2, 267.4–8. Cf. translation and discussion in Griffel, *Formation*, 375–376.

واعلم أنّك إنّما كنت تتوصّل إلى إدراك الكسوفات الجزئيّة لإحاطتك بجميع أسبابها وإحاطتك بكلّ ما في السماء فإذا وقعت الإحاطة بجميع أسبابها ووجودها انتقل منها إلى جميع المسبّبات

Know that you arrive at attaining particular eclipses due to your comprehension of all of their causes and your comprehension of all that is in the heavens. When comprehension of all of their causes and their existence occurs, then [one] moves from [comprehension of] them to [comprehension of] all of their effects.[99]

This universal knowledge of a particular eclipse is not the same as particular knowledge of that same eclipse. The latter is direct knowledge, akin to looking up in the sky and judging that an eclipse is happening right now, or will happen a moment from now, or just happened a moment ago. That kind of particular knowledge "arrives when the object of attainment [the eclipse] occurs and departs when it departs."[100] Such temporal attainment of what in the *Cure* Ibn Sīnā calls "changeables" (*mutaġayyirāt*) and "corruptibles" (*fāsidāt*) would mean that the First's essence is itself changeable.[101] Rather, the Necessary Existent's knowledge of particulars in a universal way is indirect knowledge, stemming from Its complete knowledge of everything in creation.

Ibn Sīnā elaborates further in the *Pointers*. Universal knowledge of a particular eclipse "is like knowing that a particular eclipse will occur when the moon reaches a certain opposition [to the sun] (this being a certain particular) at such-and-such a time (this being a certain particular)."[102] This manner of knowledge is eternal (*ṯābitan al-dahr*), even though the object of knowledge is particular

وهو أنّ العاقل لأنّ بين كون القمر في موضع كذا وبين كونه في موضع كذا يكون كسوف

because he who intellects that, between the moon's being in such-and-such a position and its being in such-and-such other position,

99 Trans. mod. from *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.6, 288.19–20, 290.10–12; *al-Najāt*, 284.15–16, 285.21–24.

100 *yaḥduṯu ma'a ḥudūṯi l-mudraki wa-yazūlu ma'a zawālihi*; *al-Išārāt*, VII.18, 330.8.

101 In the *Cure* and *Salvation*, Ibn Sīnā specifically states that objects attained in such a manner are "not objects of the intellect, but of the senses or Imagination" (*lam takun ma'qūlatan bal maḥsūsatan aw mutaḫayyalatan*); *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.6, 287.16–17; *al-Najāt*, 283.16.

102 *miṯlu an ya'qila anna kasūfan juz'iyyan ya'riḍu 'inda ḥuṣūli l-qamari wa-huwa juz'iyyum mā waqta kaḏā wa-huwa juz'iyyum mā fī muqābalati hāḏā*; *al-Išārāt*, VII.18, 330.4–5.

a specific eclipse occurs in a determined moment at the time of the first of the two states—his intellection of that is something stable before, during, and after the eclipse.[103]

معيّن في وقت من زمان أوّل الحالين محدود عقله ذلك أمر ثابت قبل كون الكسوف ومعه وبعده

This corresponds with, and borrows some verbiage from, what he had already said about universal knowledge of particular eclipses in the *Cure*, *Salvation*, and *Philosophy*. The closing of each passage, in particular, stands out:

Cure/Salvation

The existence of this eclipse and its [subsequent] non-existence does not change anything in you because your knowledge of the two states is one [and the same]: namely, that a certain eclipse exists, with certain qualities, after another such eclipse or after the existence of the sun in the meridian in such a way at such a time; and [that the eclipse occurs] after this [event] and after that [event]. This intellection of yours is true before, during, and after that eclipse.[104]

ثم كان وجود ذلك الكسوف وعدمه لا يغيّر منك أمراً فإنّ علمك في الحالين يكون واحداً وهو أن كسوفاً له وجود بصفات كذا بعد كسوف كذا أو بعد وجود الشمس في الحمل كذا في مدّة كذا ويكون بعد كذا وبعده كذا ويكون هذا العقل منك صادقاً قبل ذلك الكسوف ومعه وبعده

Philosophy

It would be like, for example, an astronomer who knows that such-and-such a star would first be in this place and then be in that place again; then, after a certain number of hours, it would be in conjunction with such-and-such other star; and after a certain time, for example, it would be in eclipse, remain in eclipse for a certain number of hours, then reappear. [He knows this] without knowing its present [state]. For each time that he knows its present state, his knowledge of it will not remain in another time; another knowledge

چنان بود مثلا منجم که بداند فلان ستاره نخست اینجا بود باز آنجا شود وسپس چندین ساعت با فلان ستاره قران کند وسپس چند زمان مثلا در کسوف شود وچندین ساعت در کسوف بماند آنگاه منجلی شود بی آنکه بداند که اکنون چیست که هر گاه که داند که اکنون چیست ساعتی دیگر آن دانش باوی نماند ودیگر دانش آید متغیر شود واگر آن چنان کلی داند

103 VII.18, 330.9–11.

104 Trans. mod. from *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.6, 289.17–290.3; *al-Najāt*, 285.12–16.

will arrive and be different. But if he knows in a universal way, his knowledge of it will always be one [and the same], for he would know that [the star] would be in such-and-such a place and then another, and that such-and-such a motion would occur after another. [His] knowledge would be one [and the same] and unchanging before, during, and after that movement.[105]

همیشه دانش وی یکی بود که داند سپس فلان جای بفلان جای بود وسپس آن حرکت آن حرکت آید وپیش آن حرکت وبا آن حرکت وسپس آن حرکت علم یکی بود متغیر نشود

Ibn Sīnā clarifies in the *Cure* and *Salvation* that this is because "this meaning can be predicated of many eclipses, the state of each one being [the same as] this one. You would know—due to a certain argument—that that eclipse is a single, specific one. But this would not disprove the universality [of your knowledge]."[106] As the First Cause, God sits atop the chain of creation. He creates directly the first intellect, and indirectly all that comes to be after. Bearing in mind the principle that the cause has knowledge of its effect, as God is the cause of all of the celestial movements for all of time, God therefore knows everything that results from those movements. This is, to reiterate, indirect knowledge of the particular effects of God's causation. To borrow Ibn Sīnā's example, God does not have direct, observational knowledge of a particular eclipse in time. It seems, however, that God's knowledge of eclipses exceeds knowing only *how* they occur. God knows, Ibn Sīnā insists, "during what time they will occur, during what time how many will occur, and after which [other] eclipse they will occur" (*Guidance*). God knows that when the moon is in a particular position, a "specific eclipse occurs in a determined moment" (*Pointers*). He knows the qualities of these eclipses (*Cure/Salvation*). He knows that a star will be in a given place at a given time, and then in another place after the passage of a certain amount of time (*Philosophy*). This knowledge of particulars in a universal way does not introduce change or multiplicity into God because it is not based on observation made in time. It derives from God's complete, perfect knowledge of the entire chain of causation, and so is unchanging. It remains

105 *Dānišnāma*, Ilāhiyyāt, 91.14–92.8; trans. mod. from Achena and Massé, *Le Livre de science*, I, 201.

106 *hāḍā l-maʿnā qad yajūzu an yuḥmala ʿalā kasūfātin kaṯīratin kullu wāḥidin min-hā yakūnu ḥāluhu tilka l-ḥāla lākinna-ka taʿlamu li-ḥujjatim mā anna ḍālika l-kasūfa lā yakūnu illā wāḥidan bi-ʿaynihi wa-hāḍā lā yadfaʿu l-kulliyyata*; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.6, 289.4–6; *al-Najāt*, 284.21–23.

the same before, during, and after a particular eclipse, unlike my knowledge of an eclipse, which is based on a temporal observation of it.[107]

Having established the difference between temporal, particular attainment of so-called changeables and universal, atemporal attainment, Ibn Sīnā next addresses the ways in which a thing's attributes (*ṣifa*) can change, and whether these changes entail an essential change in the thing possessing the attribute (**VII.19**). He enumerates three ways in which attributes can change. The first is when something that was white becomes black. He describes this as the transformation of a determined, non-relative attribute.[108] In other words, the attribute "white" does not depend on or require a relation to something external to what is characterized by the attribute. Ibn Sīnā leaves unstated that this involves an essential change in the thing possessing the attribute "white."

Next, he adduces two types of relative attributes, one of which imputes change in the thing possessing the relation, while the other does not.

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107 My interpretation of Ibn Sīnā's doctrine of knowledge of particulars in a universal way differs from Griffel's, who discusses the same passage of the *Guidance* as I translate above. For Griffel, God "knows what a solar eclipse is, meaning He is well aware of the causal process that leads to the movement of the moon between the earth and the sun and the effect it has on some inhabitants of the earth, but He does not know that a particular eclipse happens at a particular moment in time;" *Formation*, 375. Much has been written about Ibn Sīnā's theory of God's knowledge of particulars in a universal way. In addition to Marmura and Adamson (see above, note 91), Zghal argues—similar to Adamson, against Marmura—that Ibn Sīnā's use of the eclipse as an example results from Aristotle's own use of it, and that Ibn Sīnā used it not as an implicit restriction of God's knowledge, but as an example with the largest possible extension. To suggest that Ibn Sīnā meant that God can only have universal knowledge of particulars in the celestial realm would have Ibn Sīnā expending much effort to state the obvious fact that everything that happens in that realm is necessary and universal. Instead, Zghal proposes that the emphasis in this theory is on an individual's attributes and state in a given time. At any given time, there can only be one individual in a given species with a certain set of attributes. The species will, of course, have other individuals, but none sharing the precise state and attributes at a specific moment. The individual in a species with multiple members, then, in that moment is like the individual in a species with only a single member; Zghal, "Connaissance," 692, 695, and 698. For additional studies on Ibn Sīnā's theory and its reception, see Brenet, "Relation"; Benevich, "God's Knowledge of Particulars"; Black, "Avicenna on Individuation"; Nusseibeh, "Avicenna: Providence and God's Knowledge of Particulars"; Belo, "Averroes on God's Knowledge of Particulars"; Acar, "Reconsidering Avicenna's Position on God's Knowledge of Particulars."

108 *miṯla an yaswadda llaḏī kāna abyaḍa wa-ḏālika bi-stiḥālati ṣifatin mutaqarriratin ġayri muḍāfatin*; *al-Išārāt*, VII.19, 331.1.

مثل أن يكون الشيء قادراً على تحريك جسم ما فلو عُدم ذلك الجسم استحال أن يقال إنّه قادر على تحريكه فاستحال إذن هو عن صفته ولكن من غير تغيّر في ذاته بل في إضافة

Like when something is capable of moving a certain body. If that body were to become nonexistent, it would be impossible to say that it [the thing] is capable of moving it [the body]. It has, therefore, changed from [having] its attribute, not with any change in its essence, but in its relation.[109]

Ibn Sīnā further explains that connected to the attribute "capable" (*qādir*) is a relation to something universal, namely "to move bodies in a certain state." This relation to the universal is connected to the attribute in a primary, essential way.[110] This differs from how the attribute relates to the particulars that come under that universal; in this case, the body that can be moved—be it Zayd, ʿAmr, a rock, or a tree, to use Ibn Sīnā's examples. These, he says, relate to the attribute in a secondary, non-essential way. This is "because specific relations are not dependent upon its being capable in an inevitable way."[111] What he means by this is if someone is capable of moving something—say, ʿAmr is capable of moving Zayd—the nonexistence of Zayd does not imply an essential change in ʿAmr. The fact that something "has the attribute 'capable' does not change with a change in the states of that over which it is capable."[112] In the circumstance of Zayd's nonexistence, it would be absurd to say that ʿAmr is capable of moving Zayd; but it would be equally absurd to say that ʿAmr is no longer capable of moving something at all.

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109 VII.19, 331.2–4.

110 *fa-inna kawnahu qādiran ṣifatun la-hu wāḥidatun talḥaquhā iḍāfatun ilā amrin kulliyyin min taḥrīki ajsāmin bi-ḥālim mā maṭalan luzūmiyyan awwaliyyan ḏātiyyan*; VII.19, 331.5–6.

111 *fa-inna-hu laysa kawnuhu qādiran mutaʿalliqan bi-hi l-iḍāfātu l-mutaʿayyinatu taʿalluqa mā lā budda min-hu*; VII.19, 331.7–8. This passage's syntax is challenging, insofar as it seems not to correspond to its meaning. As it stands, it could be rephrased to read *laysati l-iḍāfātu l-mutaʿayyinatu mutaʿalliqatan bi-kawnihi qādiran*. It states that the *relations* are not dependent upon the attribute "capable," whereas the context clarifies that what Ibn Sīnā is saying is that the *attribute* "capable" does not depend on any relation. The attribute remains, regardless of whether the thing over which one is capable is present or not. Inati's suggestion that the passage should read *laysa kawnuhu qādiran mutaʿalliqan bi-l-iḍāfāti* would resolve the difficulty, but no witness in Forget's or Zārīʿī's editions attests to such a reading; Inati, *Physics and Metaphysics*, 175n25. Goichon appears to read *taʿalluqa mā lā budda la-hu* as *tuʿalliqu mā lā budda la-hu*, this being the predicate of *laysa* ("Since his state of being … does not impose an inevitable dependance"). Though this does not agree with her source (Forget, which has the former reading), she does not explain her reading; Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 455; Forget, *Le livre des théorèmes*, 184.1.

112 *aṣlu kawnihi qādiran la yataġayyaru bi-taġayyuri aḥwāli l-maqdūr ʿalay-hi mina l-ašyāʾ*; *al-Išārāt*, VII.19, 331.10.

The third category that he mentions is when "something knows that something [else] does not exist. Then, [that] something comes to be, and the thing knows that it exists."[113] In such a scenario, it is not only the relation that changes (as in the previous category), but also the thing possessing the attribute. To paraphrase Ṭūsī (since Ibn Sīnā does not provide an example), ʿAmr's knowledge that Zayd is at home changes when Zayd is no longer at home. Unlike the attribute "capable," the attribute "knowing" does not simultaneously have a relation to a universal notion and a particular that falls under that universal. It has only a relation to the specific thing known; in this case, Zayd's location.[114]

This is because, Ibn Sīnā says, knowledge of a universal is insufficient also to know a particular that falls under that universal in a particular way.[115] He explains by differentiating knowledge of a syllogism's conclusion from knowledge of its premises. Knowledge of the conclusion is resumptive (*mustaʾnaf*) knowledge. This imparts to the soul a new relation and new figuration, different from that which resulted from knowledge of the premises.[116] Since he once again does not provide an example, it is worth returning to Ṭūsī's commentary. Knowledge of the fact that animal is a body (major premise) does not itself entail knowledge of the fact that man is a body (conclusion). Another piece of knowledge—that man is an animal (minor premise, with "animal" as the middle term)—is needed. The knowledge that man is a body is resumptive knowledge. It results in a new figuration in the soul and a new relation, different from the one associated with knowledge that man is an animal. Change in the object of particular knowledge involves not just a change in relation, but in the very attribute and, therefore, the thing possessing the attribute.[117]

Ibn Sīnā concludes VII.19 by observing that something that is not subject to change (*mā laysa mawḍūʿan li-l-taġayyur*) cannot undergo changes in attributes with respect to the first and third categories. Changes that fall under the second category, however, may be possible insofar as they have no effect on the essence. The upshot of this discussion becomes clear in VII.21.

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113 *miṯla an yakūna l-šayʾu ʿāliman bi-anna šayʾan laysun ṯumma yaḥduṯu l-šayʾu fa-yaṣīru ʿāliman bi-anna l-šayʾa aysun*; VII.19, 331.12–13.

114 Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ*, 2:924.9–12.

115 "When one knows a universal concept, that is not sufficient for one to know particulars one by one" (*iḏā kāna ʿāliman bi-maʿnā kulliyyin lam yakfi ḏālika fī an yakūna ʿāliman bi-juzʾiyyin juzʾiyyin*); *al-Išārāt*, VII.19, 331.14–15. I understand this to mean knowledge of particulars in a particular way—what I have been calling direct knowledge—as humans know particulars. This contrasts with knowledge of particulars in a universal way—i.e., indirect—as God knows them.

116 331.14–332.2.

117 Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ*, 2:924.15–925.4.

The next section (**VII.20**) adds another category of change in attributes to the ones just mentioned. Ibn Sīnā observes that "your being [to the] right or left [of something] is a pure relation. But your being capable or knowing is your being in a state which is determined in you, which is followed by an implicate or consequential relation. In either one [capable or knowing], you possess a relative state, not a pure relation."[118] Of this "pure relation," Ibn Sīnā says in Metaphysics III.10 of the *Cure*, it consists of "two things which do not require something else from among the things that have determinateness in the relative such that, on its account a relation occurs between the two of them."[119] For one thing (X) to be to the right of something else (Y) does not require a third thing determined in X for that to be true; the former is to the right of the latter by virtue of their relative locations. This pure relation is neither determined (*mutaqarrira*) in X nor does it entail an essential change in X when Y moves and X is no longer to its right. In the case of the knower and the known, however, the knower possesses a quality—knowledge—that brings him into relation with the known. It is not a pure relation.

Now that Ibn Sīnā has established that certain relations lead to essential changes, and that knowledge is one such relation, we finally arrive at the heart of the matter. He concludes this unit on God's knowledge with what he labels an appendix (*taḍnīb*, **VII.21**), in which he reminds the reader that the Necessary Existent's perfect knowledge encompasses all things in a universal way that transcends time and is immune to change.

The Necessary Existent's knowledge of particulars must not be a knowledge in time, such that the present, past, and future enter into

فالواجب الوجود يجب أن لا يكون علمه بالجزئيّات علماً زمانيّاً حتّى يدخل فيه الآن

118 *kawnuka yamīnan wa-šamālan iḍāfatun maḥḍatun wa-kawnuka qādiran wa-ʿāliman huwa kawnuka fī ḥālin mutaqarriratin fī nafsika tatbaʿuhā iḍāfatun lāzimatun aw lāḥiqatun fa-anta bi-himā ḍū ḥālin muḍāfatin lā ḍū iḍāfatin maḥḍatin*; *al-Išārāt*, VII.20, 332.11–13. Ibn Sīnā says the same thing, using similar terms, of knowledge in *Philosophy*: "For whatever one is knowing of, he has an attribute in himself other than being in a relation with that thing, and other than that thing's existence. It is not like something that is to the right of something else" (*har čih vay bi-čīzī ʿālim būd va-rā ṣifatī būd bi-nafs-i ḫīš juz ān būdan-i iẓāfat-i vay bi-ān čīz va juz būdan-i ān čīz nah čunān čīzī kih bi-rāst-i čīzī būd*); *Dānišnāma*, Ilāhiyyāt, 90.8–10; see also Brenet, "Relation," 14.

119 *yakūnu l-muḍāfāni šayʾayni lā yaḥtājāni ilā šayʾin āḫara mina l-ašyāʾi llatī la-hā stiqrārun fī l-muḍāfi ḥattā taʿriḍu li-ajlihi la-huma iḍāfatun*; trans. mod. from *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, III.10, 117.18–19. For more on Ibn Sīnā and relation, see Lizzini, "Causality as Relation"; Zghal, "La Relation Chez Avicenne"; Marmura, "Avicenna's 'Chapter on the Relative.'"

والماضي والمستقبل فيعرض لصفة ذاته أن تتغيّر بل يجب أن يكون علمه بالجزئيّات على الوجه المقدَّس العالى على الزمان والدهر ويجب أن يكون عالماً بكلّ شيء لأنّ كلّ شيء لازم بوسط أو بغير وسط يتأدّى إليه بعينه قدرُه الذي هو تفصيل قضائه الأوّل تأدّياً واجباً إذ كان ما لا يجب لا يكون

t, resulting in an attribute of Its essence changing. Rather, Its knowledge of particulars must be in the sanctified manner above duration and time. And it is necessary that It be knowledgeable of all things, because everything is an implicate—whether through an intermediary or not—to which very thing Its determination reaches by necessity—[a determination] which is the specification of Its first decree—since that which is not necessary does not exist.[120]

We can see the genesis of these passages in one of Ibn Sīnā's earliest summae, *Guidance*:

وإذا علمت مع علمك الأوّل أمر الآن فقد لزمك التغيّر فإنّك إذا كنت تحكم أن كذا معدوم الآن فذلك حكم أو أمر في ذاتك ليس ذلك نفس عدم ذلك حتى تكون حالة إضافيّة ولا نفسَ وجوده عندما تعلمه موجوداً بل هو أمر متقرّر في نفسك فإذا علمت بعد ذلك أنه موجود لم يكن إنّما زالت إضافة فقط بل أمر كان وصفاً فيك مع الإضافة

When you know, together with your first knowledge, something of [this] moment, [this] implicates change in you. When you judge that that thing is now non-existent, that is a judgment, or a thing, in your essence. That is not the same as the absence of that [thing] such that it would be a relational state; nor is it the same as its existence when you know it to be existent. Rather, it is a matter determined in your soul. When, after that, you learn that it is existent, it is not the case that only a relation has ceased, but that something that was an attribute in you along with a relation.[121]

Here we see that knowledge in time is not a pure relation, though Ibn Sīnā leaves out the example of being left or right of something as a pure relation. It is,

120 *al-Išārāt*, VII.21, 332.15–333.5. According to Griffel, Ibn Sīnā's aim in *Pointers* VII.19–20, as well as the passage below from *Guidance*, is to anticipate the following potential objection to his theory of God's knowledge: "How come God can effect change in individuals, whereas He cannot know them"? The upshot of these passages, per Griffel, is that "the difference between pure relations and attributes is to conclude that God cannot have knowledge of changing things, while He can indeed effect change in things." For Griffel's discussion of *Pointers* VII.19–20 and its relation to Ġazālī's condemnation of Ibn Sīnā's theory of God's knowledge, see *Formation*, 373–384 quotes are from 379 and 381.

121 *al-Hidāya*, III.2, 268.3–8.

instead, something determined (*mutaqarrir*) in you; that thing is an attribute, though here he uses *waṣf* ("attribution") rather than *ṣifa*, as appears consistently in his later texts. When you know that something exists, and then know that that something no longer exists, this is not a superficial, purely relational change, but an essential one.

That the Necessary Existent's knowledge cannot be a "knowledge in time" is something that Ibn Sīnā has often stressed. Using terms similar to what appear here in the *Pointers*, Ibn Sīnā remarks in *Philosophy* that "it cannot be that the Necessary Existent's knowledge be in time, such that It could say, 'Today is like this, and tomorrow will be like that,' and that It could judge that it is [now] the present and [that] It will have a tomorrow."[122] This is so, as he explains in the *Cure* and *Salvation*, because it would mean that the Necessary Existent would possess a changeable essence (*mutaġayyir al-ḏāt*). Furthermore, to have knowledge in time of a particular existent requires corporeal faculties of attainment, like the Imagination.[123] Neither of these is possible for the Necessary Existent. This is why, as Ibn Sīnā stresses, God knows particulars in a universal way. God is not like the astronomer, whose knowledge that today there was an eclipse is knowledge in time based on direct observation. That same astronomer's ability accurately to predict future eclipses based on mathematical calculations remains a knowledge in time, based as it is on direct, empirical observation. God's knowledge—based on a perfect, complete knowledge of the chain of causation in the universe—is indirect, atemporal, eternal, and unchanging.

So far in this chapter, Ibn Sīnā has refrained from direct use of religious terminology and references. In VII.21, however, he refers to the all things in creation—of which the Necessary Existent has all-encompassing knowledge—as either direct or indirect consequents of Its determination and decree, using the Qur'ānic terms *qaḍā'* and *qadar*.[124] Clear as this reference may be, it is still

122 *na-šāyad kih 'ilm-i vājib-i vujūb andar zaman uftad tā u gūyad kih aknūn čunīn ast va fardā čunān-ast va varā ḥukm būd bi-ān-ki vay aknūn-ast va varā fardā-st*; *Dānišnāma*, Ilāhiyyāt, 90.5–7; trans. mod. from Achena and Massé, *Le Livre de science*, 199–200.

123 *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.6, 287.14–18; *al-Najāt*, 283.13–16.

124 As the text of *Pointers* VII suggests, *qadar* as God's determination "sets the fixed limits for each thing," while *qaḍā'* is God's "universal judgement or divine decree operating from all eternity;" Gardet, "al-Ḳaḍā' Wa 'l-Ḳadar." Ibn Sīnā elsewhere characterizes determination and decree as, "Determination (*qadar*) is the existence of causes (*'illa*) and reasons (*sabab*) and their harmonisation in accordance with their arrangement and order, leading to the effects and caused beings. These are what is necessitated by the Decree (*qaḍā'*) and what follows from it" (trans. Michot, as cited by Belo, citation below). Based on this, Belo understands decree (*qaḍā'*) as a single action (the first stage of emanation), while determ-

more allusive than his language in the parallel discussion in the Metaphysics of the *Cure* and *Salvation*, where he echoes Q 10:61. Closing out this topic with an overtly religious reference serves to link it, and all that Ibn Sīnā has discussed so far in this chapter, with what he addresses next.

4 Evil and the Order of the Good

In the concluding sections of this chapter, Ibn Sīnā transitions from establishing how it is that the Necessary Existent has universal knowledge of all particular things to how this knowledge relates to the universal order and the presence of good and evil therein. He does this first by discussing providence (**VII.22**).[125]

فالعناية هي إحاطة علم الأوّل بالكلّ وبالواجب أن يكون عليه الكلّ حتّى يكون على أحسن النظام وبأنّ ذلك واجب عنه وعن إحاطته به فيكون الموجود وفق المعلوم على أحسن النظام من غير انبعاث قصد وطلب من الأوّل الحقّ فعلم الأوّل بكيفيّة الصواب في ترتيب وجود الكلّ منبع لفيضان الخير في الكلّ

Providence is the First's comprehensive knowledge of the universe, of the necessary [layout] that the universe must be in so that it be of the best order, and of [the fact] that [all] this derives necessarily from It and Its comprehensive [knowledge] of it. Therefore, what exists will have corresponded in the best [possible] order with what is known without any intension or seeking being emitted from the First Truth. The First's knowledge of what the proper arrangement is for the existence of the universe is a source of the emanation of good throughout the universe.[126]

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ination (*qadar*) involves "the detailed unfolding of God's creative command;" *Chance and Determinism*, 114. Sebti observes that the celestial souls, through their causal influence on the sublunary realm, are the means by which divine providence is effected in that realm and thereby form a link between *qaḍā'* and *qadar*; *Avicenne*, 26, 42–46.

125 Much has been written about Ibn Sīnā's conception of providence, as well as the related issues of theodicy and human free will vs. determinism. For a discussion of providence in Ibn Sīnā with a focus on the prophet as a necessary effect thereof, see Sebti, *Avicenne*, 27–55. For determinist readings of Ibn Sīnā, see Belo, *Chance and Determinism*, 91–120; Michot, *Destinée*, 61–64; Marmura, "The Metaphysics of Efficient Causality"; and Hourani, "The Secret of Destiny." For readings allowing for human free will, see Rashed, "Théodicée et Approximation"; Janssens, "The Problem of Human Freedom"; Ivry, "Destiny Revisited." For a compatibilist reading (to borrow McGinnis's term), see Ruffus and McGinnis, "Willful Understanding"; de Cillis, *Free Will and Predestination*, Chapters 1–2 (pp. 23–95).

126 *al-Išārāt*, VII.22, 333.7–12.

This is not the first time that Ibn Sīnā discusses providence in the *Pointers*. That occurs in VI.9, where he says the following:

لا تجد إن طلبت مخلصاً إلّا أن تقول إنّ تمثّل النظام الكلّيّ في العلم السابق مع وقته الواجب اللائق يفيض منه ذلك النظام على ترتيبه في تفاصيله معقولاً فيضانه وذلك هو العناية

If you look sincerely, you will not find [anything], except that you will say: from the representation of the universal order in prior knowledge, together with its necessary and appropriate moment, there emanates in an intelligible manner that order properly laid out in its details. That is providence.[127]

From these two excerpts, we see that God's knowledge is all-encompassing. From God's all-encompassing knowledge there necessarily emanates everything that exists in the universe in its proper place and time. The emanation of this universal order—the "best" order—is the source of all good in existence. This corresponds with what Ibn Sīnā declares the meaning of providence to be in the *Cure* and *Salvation*:[128]

فيجب أن يعلم أن العناية هي كون الأوّل عالماً لذاته بما عليه الوجود في نظام الخير وعلّة لذاته للخير والكمال بحسب الإمكان وراضياً به على النحو المذكور فيعقل نظام الخير على الوجه الأبلغ في الإمكان فيفيض عنه ما يعقله نظاماً وخيراً على الوجه الأبلغ الذي يعقله فياضاناً على أتمّ تأدية إلى النظام بحسب الإمكان فهذا هو معنى العناية

It must be known that providence is the First's having knowledge, through Its essence, of existence in the order of the good; [the First's being] a cause, through its essence, of good and perfection in accordance with what is possible; and [the First's being] satisfied with it in the aforementioned manner. It knows the order of the good to the greatest extent possible. There emanates from It, in a most complete way, what It knows, leading to the order in accordance with what is possible. This is the meaning of providence.[129]

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127 VI.9, 298.7–9.

128 For other discussions of Ibn Sīnā's concept of providence (*ʿināya*) and theodicy, see Lizzini, "Matter and Nature"; Shihadeh, "Avicenna's Theodicy"; Inati, *Problem of Evil*, esp. 125–158; Gardet, "*ʿināya*."

129 *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.6, 339.8–12; *al-Najāt*, 320.11–15. Ibn Sīnā similarly remarks in *Provenance and Destination* that the universe proceeds from the First's comprehensive knowledge, in the best (in fact, only) possible way, in the order of the good; *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, II.11, 88.6–9. In *Guidance*, he also mentions God's satisfaction with the order of the universe that emanates from Him; *al-Hidāya*, III.4, 271.3–4. He speaks of "the order and the good" (*al-niẓām wa-l-ḫayr*) in *Notes*; but, this should probably be read

In leading up to this passage on providence, Ibn Sīnā observes that the universe does not proceed from the First for the sake of creation (*li-ajlinā*), nor out of any particular concern for creation, or in response to any motivation (*dāʿin*) or preference (*īṯār*).[130] Nor, however, does it proceed by chance (*lā yaṣduru ittifāqan*).[131] It is an emanation that results from the First's all-encompassing knowledge.

That the universe is arranged in the best order does not mean, however, that no evil enters into it. In the next section (**VII.23**), Ibn Sīnā adduces categories of contingent things (*al-umūr al-mumkina*) in relation to evil. This section ties in with the first section of this chapter, in which Ibn Sīnā refers to the order of existence. Among contingent things, there are (I have added the numbers in the following passages):

منها أمور يجوز أن يتعرّى وجودها عن الشرّ والخلل والفساد أصلاً وأمور لا يمكن أن تكون فاضلةً فضيلتُها إلّا وتكون بحيث يعرض منها شرّ ما عند ازدحامات الحركات ومصادمات المتحرّكات وفي القسمة أمور شرّيّة إمّا على الإطلاق وإمّا بحسب الغلبة

[1] Things for which it is possible that their existence is absolutely free of evil, defects, and corruption. [2] Things whose virtue[132] cannot be excellent except inasmuch as a certain evil comes from them upon the thronging of motions and the collisions of things moved. [3] [Also] in the [division of contingent things] are evil things, either [3.a] absolutely or [3.b] on account of a predominance.[133]

Ibn Sīnā presents a similar analysis in the Metaphysics of the *Cure* and *Salvation*, although the categories appear in a different order. He states that things in the Estimation (i.e., contingent things) are

إمّا أمور إذا توهّمت موجودة يمتنع أن تكون إلّا شرّاً على الإطلاق وإمّا أمور وجودها أن يكون خيراً ويمتنع أن تكون شروراً وناقصة وإمّا أمور

either [1 = 3.a] things which, when assumed to be existent, cannot but be absolute evil; [2 = 1] things whose existence is good and which cannot be evil or deficient; [3] things in which

as *niẓām al-ḫayr*, given the frequency and regularity with which he uses this phrase when discussing providence; *al-Taʿlīqāt*, #747, 456.7.

130 Ruffus and McGinnis explain that Ibn Sīnā denies that God acts for the sake of the world in order to preserve God's absolute unity; "Willful Understanding," 175.

131 *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.6, 339.5–8; *al-Najāt*, 320.7–10. For a discussion of the concept of chance and its relation to evil in Ibn Sīnā's philosophy, see Belo, *Chance and Determinism*, 21–53.

132 "Virtue" understood as a good or useful quality.

133 *al-Išārāt*, VII.23, 333.14–334.2.

تغلب فيها الخيريّة إذا وجدت وجودها ولا يمكن غير ذلك لطباعها وإمّا أمور تغلب فيها الشرّيّة وإمّا أمور متساوية الحالين

goodness predominates when their existence exists and which, on account of their nature, cannot be any other way; [4 = 3.b] things in which evilness predominates; and [5] things in which the two states [of good and evil] are equal.[134]

As presented in the *Pointers*, the beings that fall into the first category—Ibn Sīnā here calls them "intellectual substances and the like" (*al-jawāhir al-ʿaqliyya wa-mā yušbihuhā*)—enter into existence when existence emanates from the "pure munificence" (*al-jūd al-maḥḍ*). This is, of course, a reference to the Necessary Existent and the celestial intellects, souls, and bodies that emanate from It. For the second category, Ibn Sīnā does not say what precipitates its emanation, only that its emanation is necessary. As an example of this category, he mentions fire: "Fire's virtue cannot be excellent nor can its aid be perfected in completing existence without [also] harming and causing pain to those animal bodies whose colliding [motions] happen to come into contact with it."[135] Ibn Sīnā often relied upon fire as an example of something whose existence brings about both good and evil:

Guidance

كحال النار في تكميلها الكلَّ ونفعها فيما يتكوّن منها وتلك الحال لا تكون لها إلّا أن تكون بحيث تحرق بعض الأشياء النفيسة أيضاً فهو وجود مرجَّح الاستحقاق في العقل على عدمه وإن كانت خاصّيّته خيريّةً بحيث لا تكون إلّا ويمكن صدور الآفة عنه

Like the state of fire in perfecting the universe and being beneficial to what is generated from it. This state does not belong to it without it also burning some excellent things. It is an existence which the intellect determines to be worthy over its over non-existence, even though its property is goodness insofar as it cannot exist without the possibility of harm proceeding from it.[136]

134 *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.6, 345.17–346.2; *al-Najāt*, 325.8–11.

135 *fa-inna l-nāra lā tafḍulu faḍīlatuhu wa-lā takmulu maʿūnatuhu fī tatmīmi l-wujūdi illā wa-an takūna bi-ḥayṭu tuʾḍī wa-tuʾlimu mā tattafiqu la-hā muṣādamatuhu min ajsāmin ḥayawāniyyatin*; *al-Išārāt*, VII.23, 334.7–9. Goichon and Inati both read *tafḍul* and *takmul* as *tufḍil* ("confer") and *tukmil* ("perfect"); Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 459; Inati, *Physics and Metaphysics*, 178. While plausible, this reading—especially *tufḍil*—does not correspond with the passage quoted above, wherein Ibn Sīnā uses *takūn fāḍilatan faḍīlatuhā*. Ibn Sīnā's use of *fāḍila* rather than *mufḍila* suggests that we should read the verb here as Form I instead of Form IV.

136 *al-Hidāya*, III.4, 287.5–288.1.

Cure, Salvation

If, among [these elements], it were not such that fire necessarily burns when the collisions occurring in the course of the universe bring it into contact with a nobleman's garment, then fire would not be something from which a general benefit is derived.[137]

ولو لم تكن النار منها بحيث إذا تأدّت بها المصادمات الواقعة في مجرى الكلّ على الضرورة إلى ملاقاة رداء رجل شريف وجب احتراقه لم تكن النار منتفعاً بها النفع العامّ

Philosophy

This is like how when fire touches man and, being stronger than him, it burns the man. It is impossible that fire be fire and man be man, but the former not burn and the latter not be burned. And it is impossible that collision never occur, since evil, corruption, and illness necessarily come to be, not by intention, but because they are inevitable.[138]

واین چنانست که چون آتش بمردم رسد و از وی قویتر بود مردم را بسوزد که محال است که آتش آتش بود و مردم مردم بود و آن نسوزد و این سوخته نشود و محال است که این گرد آمدن هرگز اتفاق نیوفتد پس شر و فساد و بیماری بضرورت همی آید نه مقصود است و لیکن از وی چاره نیست

This second category also includes "animal bodies" (*ajsām ḥayawāniyya*). Like fire, animal bodies cannot exist without combining both good and evil. In the case of humans, this evil may arise from such corporeal faculties as appetite (*al-šahwa*) and ire (*al-ġaḍab*),[139] and may cause harm to them in the afterlife, which Ibn Sīnā here refers to as the (ultimate) destination (*al-maʿād*). Fortunately, he informs us that such evil occurs in "fewer individuals than those who are free [from deficiency], and in moments fewer than in moments of freedom

137 *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.6, 342.6–8; *al-Najāt*, 322.19–21.

138 *Dānišnāma*, Ilāhiyyāt, 163.3–8.

139 Regarding appetite and ire, Ibn Sīnā says, "The aforementioned faculties do not confer their benefit except insofar as there occurs, on account of them, at the time of the knockings, an accidental error and overwhelming excitement" (*wa-takūnu l-quwā l-maḏkūratu lā tuġnī ġanāʾahā aw takūna bi-ḥayṭu yaʿriḍu la-hā ʿinda l-muṣākkāti ʿāriḍu ḫaṭāʾin wa-ġalabatu hayajānin*); *al-Išārāt*, VII.23, 334.15–335.1. I read *ġanāʾahā* and *ḫaṭāʾ* with Forget against Zārīʿī's *ġināhā* and *ḥaṭaʾ*; Forget, *Le livre des théorèmes*, 186.16. Inati and Zārīʿī correctly read *aw* as exceptive and therefore governing the following verb in the accusative; Inati, *Physics and Metaphysics*, 178. Nevertheless, Inati erroneously connects *al-quwā l-maḏkūra* with fire rather than the faculties that had just been mentioned. Additionally, she translates *lā tuġnī ġanāʾahā* as "do not enjoy their richness," the meaning of which is unclear. Goichon mistakenly connects this sentence to the prior and reads *aw takūn* as beginning a new sentence; Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 460.

[from deficiency]."[140] As for the third category—which consists of (3.a) absolutely or (3.b) predominantly evil things—Ibn Sīnā has no comment here. In the Metaphysics of the *Cure* and *Salvation*, however, he asserts that they do not actually exist.[141] He concludes this section by acknowledging that, yes, providence and the universal order do contain evil. But, he clarifies, "evil is in the determination accidentally."[142]

Though evil may be found within the universal order of God's determination, Ibn Sīnā clarifies that evil is not as widespread as one may think (**VII.24**). In response to a hypothetical objection (how can evil be rare when so many people succumb to their appetites and anger?), he likens the state of the soul vis-à-vis good and evil to the state of the body vis-à-vis beauty and ugliness:

فاسمع أنّه كما أنّ أحوال البدن في هيأته ثلاثة حال البالغ في الجمال والصحّة وحال المتوسّط في الجمال والصحّة وحال القبيح والمسقام أو السقيم والأوّل والثاني ينالان من السعادة العاجلة البدنيّة قسطاً وافراً أو معتدلاً أو يسلمان كذلك حال النفس في هيأته ثلاثة

Listen! Just as the states of the body in its figuration are three—[1] the state of one who has a high degree of beauty and health, [2] the state of one who has a moderate degree of beauty and health, and [3] the state of one who is ugly and sickly or ill. The first two obtain an ample or moderate share of immediate,[143] corporeal happiness, or are in a sound condition—likewise the states of the soul in its figuration are three:

حال البالغ في فضيلة العقل والخلق وله الدرجة القصوى في السعادة الأخرويّة وحال من ليس له ذلك لا سيّما في المعقولات إلّا أنّ جهله ليس

[1] The state of one who has a high degree [of] excellence in terms of intellect and [good moral] dispositions. He has the utmost degree of happiness in the afterlife. [2] [Then

140 *wa-ḏālika fī ašḫāṣin aqalla min ašḫāṣi l-sālimīna wa-fī awqātin aqalla min awqāti l-salāma*; *al-Išārāt*, VII.23, 335.1–2. I understand *al-sālimīn* and *al-salāma* in the sense of sound, free from defect, privation, or imperfection (= evil), rather than the sense of "safe" and "safety;" cf. Inati, *Physics and Metaphysics*, 178. In the *Cure* and *Salvation*, Ibn Sīnā similarly remarks that "Evil is scarce among individual existents" (*fa-l-šarru fī ašḫāṣi l-mawjūdāti qalīlun*); *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.6, 342.4; *al-Najāt*, 322.16.

141 "As for that which is entirely or predominantly evil, or which is equally [evil and good], it does not exist" (*wa-ammā mā kulluhu šarrun awi l-ġālibu awi l-musāwī ayḍan fa-lam yūjad*); *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.6, 346.3–4; *al-Najāt*, 325.12–13.

142 *fa-l-šarru dāḫilun fī l-qadari bi-l-ʿaraḍi*; *al-Išārāt*, VII.23, 335.3–4.

143 "Immediate" in the sense of worldly pleasures, as opposed to *al-ājila*, the awaited pleasures of the afterlife (*al-saʿāda al-uḫrawiyya*).

there is] the state of one who does not have that—especially with regard to intelligibles—though his ignorance is not of the kind that causes harm in the ultimate destination. Even if he has not much stored (such as knowledge) [that is of] great benefit in the ultimate destination, he is nevertheless among the group of people of sound condition who obtain a certain share of goods awaited [in the afterlife]. [3] The other is like the sickly and ill, suitable for pain in the afterlife.[144]

على الجهة الضارّة في المعاد وإن كان ليس له كثيرُ ذُخرٍ من العلم جسيمُ النفع في المعاد إلّا أنّه في أهل السلامة ونيل حظٍّ ما من الخيرات الآجلة وآخر كالمسقام والسقيم هو عُرضة الأذى في الآخرة

When the middle group—neither fully characterized by virtue in knowledge, nor fully lacking thereof—is considered together with the first group, Ibn Sīnā observes that the people who will experience pleasure in the afterlife form a superabundant majority. The same hypothetical objection appears in the Metaphysics of the *Cure* and *Salvation*. The response carries the same idea, but—in atypical fashion—is much more concise:

If one says, "Evil is not something rare or very uncommon, but in fact is superabundant," this is not the case. In fact, evil is abundant, but not superabundant. There is a difference between "abundant" and "superabundant." There are many things which are abundant but not superabundant, like illnesses. They are abundant, but not superabundant.[145]

فإن قال قائل ليس الشرّ شيئاً نادراً أو أقلّياً بل هو أكثريّ فليس هو كذلك بل الشرّ كثير وليس بأكثريّ وفرق بين الكثير والأكثريّ فإنّ ههنا أموراً كثيرة هي كثيرة وليست بأكثريّة كالأمراض فإنّها كثيرة وليست أكثيريّة

Apparently concerned for how misinformed his reader might be, Ibn Sīnā continues emphatically quashing the mistaken notion that most people do not experience happiness in the afterlife (**VII.25**).

Do not let it occur to you that there is [only] one kind of happiness in the afterlife! *Do not* let it occur to you that it is only acquired through perfection in knowledge (even if that

لا يقعنّ عندك أنّ السعادة في الآخرة نوع واحد ولا يقعنّ عندك أنّها لا تنال أصلاً إلّا بالاستكمال في العلم وإن كان ذلك يجعل نوعها نوعاً أشرف

144 *al-Išārāt*, VII.24, 335.8–336.2.

145 *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.6, 347.3–5; *al-Najāt*, 326.5–8.

would make it a nobler kind)! *Do not* let it occur to you that varieties of sin sever the safeguarding of salvation! In fact, only a certain kind of ignorance entails eternal perdition, and only a certain kind and extent of vice exposes [one] to limited punishment. But that pertains to few individuals. Do not lend your ear to him who makes salvation something that stops upon a certain number [of people] and is turned away from the people of ignorance and sin for all eternity. Deem God's mercy to be wide![146]

ولا يقعنّ عندك أنّ تفاريق الخطايا باتكة لعصمة النجاة بل إنّما يهلك الهلاك السرمد ضرب من الجهل وإنّما يعرّض للعذاب المحدود ضرب من الرذيلة وحدّ منه وذلك في أقلّ أشخاص الناس ولا تصغ إلى من يجعل النجاة وقفاً على عدد ومصروفة عن أهل الجهل والخطايا صرفاً إلى الأبد واستوسع رحمة الله

This passage exemplifies Ibn Sīnā's optimist theodicy,[147] and repels any notion that he may have been an elitist who held that only the intellectually advanced experience pleasure in the afterlife (though he did most certainly believe that the realest, highest pleasure belongs to the intellectual elite, as we will see in the next chapter). He must, however, have expected his reader to hold misguided notions about the afterlife, given how frequently he resorts to the so-called "energetic *nūn*" (*nūn al-ta'kīd*) to emphasize that they should not.[148]

Ibn Sīnā next entertains another possible objection (**VII.26**): Why is it not the case that the second category (the one that neither enjoys perfect knowledge of the intelligibles nor suffers the kind of ignorance that requires punishment) cannot just be free from its attachment to evil? The same hypothetical question appears in the Metaphysics of the *Cure* and *Salvation*. His consistent response is to say, quite simply, that if that were the case, it would no longer be what it is.

Pointers

If it were to be free from that attaching to it, then it would be something other than this category; it would be the first category, which is devoid of it.[149]

أنّه لو برئ عن أن يلحقه ذلك لكان شيئاً غير هذا القسم وكان القسم الأوّل وقد فرغ عنه

146 *al-Išārāt*, VII.25, 336.5–12. Emphasis in original. Ibn Sīnā addresses the ignorance that leads to perdition and the multiple kinds of happiness in the afterlife in *Pointers* VIII.

147 Paraphrasing Shihadeh in his account of Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's criticism of Ibn Sīnā's ontological/cosmological account of evil; "Avicenna's Theodicy," 62.

148 Ibn Sīnā returns to this tactic in *Pointers* X (see chapter four), when he presents his scientific explanations for such rare, seemingly supernatural phenomena as miracles and magic.

149 *al-Išārāt*, VII.26, 337.1–2.

Cure, *Salvation*

لم يكن هي هي إذ قلنا إنّ وجودها الوجود الذي يستحيل أن يكون بحيث لا يعرض عنها شرّ فإذا صيرت بحيث لا يعرض عنها شرّ فلا يكون وجودها الوجود الذي لها بل يكون وجود أشياء أخرى

It would not be it, since we have said that its existence is the one that is impossible for it to be insofar as no evil comes from it. If it is made to become such that no evil comes from it, its existence would not be the existence that belongs to it; rather, it would the existence of other things.[150]

This category, he says in the *Pointers*, "is, in its fundamental circumstance, only among that which cannot have abundant good attached to it without it being such that evil [also] attaches to it necessarily upon the collisions that transpire. When it is free from this, then it is made to be something other than itself. It would be as if fire were made to be not-fire and water not-water."[151] He expands on his explanation in the Metaphysics of the *Cure* and *Salvation*:

أنّ النار إذا كان وجودها أن تكون محرقة وكان وجود المحرق هو أنّه إذا مسّ ثوب الفقير أحرقه وكان وجود ثوب الفقير أنّه قابل للاحتراق وكان وجود واحد منهما أن يعرض له حركات شيء وكان وجود الحركات الشتّى في الأشياء على هذه الصفة وجود ما يعرض له الالتقاء وكان وجود الالتقاء بين الفاعل والمنفعل بالطبع وجوداً يلزمه الفعل والانفعال فإن لم تكن الثواني لم تكن الأوائل فالكلّ إنّما رتّبت فيه القوى الفعّالة

Fire, if its existence is such that it burns [what it touches], and the existence of what burns is such that when it touches the garment of a poor man, it burns it, and the existence of the poor man's garment is such that it is combustible, and the existence of one of [those] two things is that a certain thing's motions occur to it, and the existence of the various motions in things having this description is the existence of something to which encounters occur, and the existence of the encounter between agent and patient is an existence which, by nature, is followed by action and passion

150 *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.6, 346.7–9; *al-Najāt*, 325.16–18.

151 *wa-inna-mā hāḏā l-qismu fī aṣli waḍ'ihi mā laysa yumkinu an yakūna l-ḫayru l-kaṯīru yata'allaqu bi-hi illā wa-huwa bi-ḫayṯu yalḥaqu šarrun bi-l-ḍarūrati 'inda l-muṣādamāti l-jāriyati fa-iḏā bari'a 'an hāḏā fa-qad ju'ila ġayra nafsihi wa-ka-annā l-nāra ju'ilat ġayra l-nāri wa-l-mā'a ġayra l-mā'i*; *al-Išārāt*, VII.26, 337.2–5. I agree with Sebti, who understands collisions (*muṣādamāt*) as referring to interactions of the celestial causes of sublunar events, over Janssens' reading of the term as conflicts arising from oppositions between faculties of the soul; Sebti, *Avicenne*, 224n2; Janssens, "The Problem of Human Freedom," 114.

(because if the secondary [causes] do not exist, the primary [causes] do not exist), then there is arranged in the universe active and passive powers, celestial and terrestrial, physical and psychological, insofar as they lead to the universal order, with the impossibility that they be as they are and not lead to certain evils.[152]

والمنفعلة السماويّة والأرضيّة الطبيعيّة والنفسانيّة بحيث تؤدّي إلى النظام الكلّيّ مع استحالة أن تكون هي على ما هي عليه ولا تؤدّي إلى شرور

Fire cannot be fire if it does not burn; it will burn anything that is combustible. When burning fuel, this results in a good, turning cold to warm, raw food to cooked, etc. Nevertheless, this good cannot be separated from the evil that also results from fire; get too close to that fire when staying warm or cooking, and you will get burned. Even though fire cannot exist without causing some evil, for Ibn Sīnā, this does not change the fact that the universal order is the best possible order. The best possible order includes evil along with good, as evil is a byproduct of creation.[153] Evil, in fact, is necessary for there to be good.[154] The only way to prevent evil would be for there to be no emanation from God in the first place, but that would result in the elimination of all that is good, as well.[155]

This chapter concludes with one final, possible objection (**VII.27**): If evil is a part of God's determination (*qadar*), then how can there be punishment in the afterlife given the apparent lack of choice in this life? Ibn Sīnā's response continues his analogy between the soul and the body, and also alludes to what is to come in the next chapter. He avers that the rational soul is punished for its sin (= imperfection) in the same way that a glutton's body is punished with illness. In both cases, there was no escape from the punishment, because it is the necessary result of prior states and actions. Ibn Sīnā considers this an internal kind of punishment.[156] Gorging oneself on sweets inevitably results in a stom-

152 *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.6, 346.11–17; *al-Najāt*, 325.19–27.

153 Belo, *Chance and Determinism*, 118.

154 *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.6, 342.4–5; *al-Najāt*, 322.16–17. Janssens suggests that Ibn Sīnā frames the existence of evil in this way in order to absolve God from blame for creating a universe with evil rather than one devoid of it; "The Problem of Human Freedom," 113.

155 Paraphrasing de Cillis, *Free Will and Predestination*, 50. Inati, in her analysis of theodicy according to Ibn Sīnā, concludes that since God cannot create a world without evil, Ibn Sīnā must be understood as denying God's omnipotence (something he does not do explicitly); *Problem of Evil*, 167, 169.

156 This is not to say that Ibn Sīnā removes punishment from God's power. Here, Ibn Sīnā

ach ache; it does not rely on some external body to impose the stomach ache as punishment.

That being said, there is nothing wrong with believing in an external punisher (i.e., God). In fact, this is beneficial for most people. The fear that the threat of an external punisher instills helps keep people on the right path. Even though punishing that person will involve causing him harm—something which, generally speaking, is evil—this does not nullify its value. Ibn Sīnā likens this to amputation: "A body part is severed and pain is caused for the sake of the body in its entirety, so that it may become well."[157] What may seem like evil when considered at the micro level turns out, when considered from the macro level, to be a benefit.

5 Ibn Sīnā, Optimist

Pointers VII opens by addressing the simplicity of the rational soul (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqa*) as intellect: it is neither corporeal, nor does it rely on a corporeal instrument to perform its activity of making contact with the active intellect and thinking the intelligibles. Through the course of the chapter, Ibn Sīnā addresses many other related topics: the intellect, the act of intellection, and the relation of intellect to intelligible; God, as the First, Necessary Existent, is pure intellect; God's knowledge encompasses both universals and particulars, albeit the latter in a universal way; the universe emanates from God's perfect, all-encompassing knowledge; both good and evil necessarily exist as a part of the best possible order of the universe; most people are characterized by a combination of good and evil, in which good predominates; and, finally, contrary to popular belief, most people will experience pleasure in the afterlife.

There is nothing that Ibn Sīnā says in this chapter that he has not already said elsewhere, although perhaps in a different way. In fact, it is supremely evident that Ibn Sīnā had developed some ideas—like the soul's incorporeality and relative independence—by the time he was eighteen (an age when he might not yet have finished secondary school in the American system!). The regular manner in which he expressed this idea throughout his career is one of the best

strikes a balance between determinism and human freedom/moral responsibility. As the true creator and First Cause of the universe, God is ultimately responsible for punishments, even those that Ibn Sīnā characterizes as internal; on this, see Janssens, "The Problem of Human Freedom," 117.

157 *fa-yuqṭaʿu ʿaḍwun wa-yuʾlamu li-ajli l-badani bi-kulliyyatihi li-yaslama*; *al-Išārāt*, VII.27, 338.7.

examples of his intellectual and rhetorical consistency when it comes to the topics addressed in *Pointers* VII–X.

Overall, passages that resemble what appears in *Pointers* VII—either in terms of content, language used, or both—appear in at least ten other works by Ibn Sīnā; five of them are summae, meaning they contain, at a minimum, sections on logic, natural philosophy, and metaphysics; three of them are dedicated to Metaphysics of the Rational Soul. Most prominent of the former is the *Cure*, Metaphysics VIII.6 (on God's being an intellect and the nature of His knowledge) and IX.6 (on providence and theodicy); these chapters appear verbatim—minus a few paragraphs—in *Salvation*. There are also abundant parallels with the *Cure*, De Anima V.2 (on the independence and incorporeality of the soul), which Ibn Sīnā copied from the parallel chapter in *Lesser Destination*, and would later copy again in *Salvation*. In addition to *Lesser Destination*, other treatises dedicated to Metaphysics of the Rational Soul—*Provenance and Destination*, *Immolation Destination*—show similarities in their sections on the soul's incorporeality and independence, and on providence. Fewer similarities show up in *Elements* and *Guidance*, though this may be due in part to the relative brevity of these texts. As the next chapter will reiterate, it is evident that Ibn Sīnā had arrived at developed theories on these subjects, and at how to express them, by the time he composed the *Provenance and Destination* and *Lesser Destination* in the early years of the 5th/11th century.

To my knowledge, no scholar has included *Pointers* VII among the mystical/Sufi chapters of this work, or sought evidence for Ibn Sīnā's mysticism/Sufism in this chapter. This is no surprise, as the feature that has led so many to see Sufism and/or mysticism in *Pointers* VIII–X—the presence of Sufi vocabulary and themes—is absent in this chapter. With the overarching focus on the intellect and its function, there is nothing in this chapter to support claims that Ibn Sīnā maintained a non-standard epistemology that goes beyond reason and intellect. Moreover, in Ibn Sīnā's condemnation of Porphyry on the union between intellect and intelligible, *Pointers* VII presents compelling evidence against one of the two principal features of Ibn Sīnā's alleged mysticism/Sufism: union between the human soul and the divine. I will return to the significance of this in chapter 5.

Nothing distinguishes any of the twenty-seven sections in this chapter from another, aside from their being labeled a pointer (*išāra*) or reminder (*tanbīh*); or, less frequently, story (*ḥikāya*), appendix (*taḏnīb*), or supposition (*wahm*). Yet, the underlying logic of the chapter is clear. Each pointer builds toward the next, with each topic (as I have grouped them) forming the basis of what comes after it. We could read the final topic on providence and theodicy on its own, but would not fully grasp the nature of God's creative knowledge without also

having read the topic on the nature of God's knowledge. That, in turn, requires knowing about God as an intellect and, more broadly, how intellects function independently from bodies.

Much like how each section within the chapter contributes to a whole that is greater than its parts, this chapter lays the groundwork for what comes next: in *Pointers* VIII, a discussion of intellectual pleasure and pain, with a focus on pleasure and pain in the afterlife; in *Pointers* IX, a presentation of the human intellect's relations to the active intellect and of the "knower" (*al-ʿārif*), the one most capable of and experienced in making contact with the active intellect; and in *Pointers* X, a scientific explanation of how certain individuals can perform marvels and miracles. What connects each of these chapters and makes them a coherent whole is *al-nafs al-nāṭiqa*: the human rational soul.

CHAPTER 2

The Soul's Ultimate Destination

Ibn Sīnā gave *Pointers* VIII the title "On Joy and Happiness" (*fī l-bahja wa-l-saʿāda*). He dedicates this chapter to the human rational soul's afterlife, what he called its place of return (*al-maʿād*)—the soul's final, ultimate destination. His primary goal in this chapter is to establish the superiority of the people he calls "knowers" (*al-ʿārifūn*) over "non-knowers." This superiority is in terms of the likelihood of experiencing intellectual joy or misery, both before and after the soul's separation from the body (in other words, in this life and the afterlife).[1]

In order to establish his goal, Ibn Sīnā addresses a number of related topics, which I use to frame the discussion in this chapter. He first sets out to demonstrate that internal, intellectual pleasures and pains are superior to external, physical pleasures and pains (VIII.1–2). This serves as a foundation to discuss the nature of pleasure, pain, and their essential components: perfection and good, and imperfection and evil, respectively (VIII.3–9). Having established the nature of pleasure and pain, Ibn Sīnā next addresses the circumstances in which one is (or is not) aware of pleasure and pain (VIII.10–11). He then elaborates on the circumstances of those who will experience pleasure or pain in the afterlife (VIII.12–17); it is in this section that he introduces the special case of the knower (*al-ʿārif*), the lone category of persons who may experience some measure of the pleasure and joy of the afterlife while still associated with their bodies. Ibn Sīnā concludes the chapter by revisiting providence and the relative rank of all beings in terms of the level of joy that they experience (VIII.18–19).

1 Elsewhere, when speaking of the afterlife Ibn Sīnā has characterized "happiness" (*saʿāda*) as "eternal, substantial, unadulterated pleasure" (*wa-l-laḏḏatu l-sarmadiyyatu l-jawhariyyatu l-ġayru mašūbatin saʿādatun*); *al-Aḍḥawiyya*, VI, 144.13–14. Inati argues that Ibn Sīnā's goal in the eighth chapter is to demonstrate that happiness is the result of goodness; *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 8. That perspective, however, overlooks a broader aim of this section. That happiness is a result of (attaining) goodness is a function of Ibn Sīnā's overall goal of establishing why and how knowers experience a form of happiness superior to that of non-knowers.

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1 Internal Pleasures Are Superior to External Pleasures

Ibn Sīnā begins the eighth chapter by broaching what he refers to as a misconception widely held by common folk: that the strongest and highest pleasures are sensory, while anything else is weak, imaginary, and unreal (**VIII.1**).

وقد يسبق إلى الأوهام العامّيّة أنّ اللذّات القويّة المستعلية هي الحسّيّة وأنّ ما عداها لذّات ضعيفة وكلّها خيالات غير حقيقة وقد يمكن أن ينبّه من جملتهم من له تمييز ما فيقال له أليس ألذّ ما تصفونه من هذا القبيل هو المنكوحات والمطعومات وأمور تجري مجراها وأنتم تعلمون أنّ المتمكّن من غلبة ما ولو في أمر خسيس كالشطرنج والنرد قد يعرض له مطعوم ومنكوح فيرفضهما لما يعتاضه من لذّة الغلبة الوهميّة وقد يعرض مطعوم ومنكوح لطالب العفّة والرئاسة مع صحّة جسمه وصحبة حشمه فينفض اليد منهما مراعاةً للحشمة فتكون مراعاةُ الحشمة آثر وألذّ لا محالة هناك من المنكوح والمطعوم

The minds of the commoners have the preconception that strong and elevated pleasures are sensory, and that others are weak pleasures, all being unreal fantasies. But it is possible to draw the attention of one among them who has a certain [measure of] discernment, saying to him: is not the most pleasurable of what you describe of this kind [sensory pleasures] sex, food, and similar things? But you know that someone who is capable of a certain victory—even if it were in a trivial matter, such as chess or backgammon—may be presented with food and sex and will reject[2] them in exchange for what he would receive from the pleasure of the victory related to the [faculty of] Estimation. And [you know that] food and sex may be presented to someone pursuing restraint and dignity, in addition to the health of his body and the company of decency. [Such a person] would remove his hand from them in observance of decency. Thus, observing decency is certainly more preferred and more pleasurable here than sex or food.

وإذا عرض للكرام من الناس الالتذاذ بإنعام يصيبون موضعه آثروه على الالتذاذ بمشتهىً حيوانيّ متنافس فيه وآثروا فيه غيرهم على أنفسهم مسرعين إلى الإنعام به وكذلك فإنّ

Additionally, when there is presented to generous people [the opportunity to] take pleasure in providing [to others that] which they have properly earned,[3] they prefer that to taking pleasure in something desired by the animal [faculty] of appetite over which one

2 Following Michot in reading *fa-yarfuḍuhumā* over *fa-yarfuḍuhu* in Forget and Zārīʿī; Michot, "Joie et bonheur," 52n15; Forget, *Le livre des théorèmes*, 190.8.

3 Goichon and Michot both translate *inʿāmin yuṣībūna mawḍiʿahu* as "they get right to it." Ibn

competes. They prefer others over themselves in this regard, hastening to give generously of it. Likewise, someone with a big heart makes little of hunger and thirst next to preserving his honor, and belittles fear of death and the sudden descent of perdition when in the midst of battle with combatants. One may hurl oneself into a mass of people, mounting the back of danger on account of the pleasure of praise that he anticipates, even if it were after death, as if that would reach him while he is dead.[4]

كبير النفس يستصغر الجوع والعطش عند المحافظة على ماء الوجه ويستحقر هول الموت ومفاجأة العطب عند مناجزة المبارزين وربّما اقتحم الواحد على عدد دهم ممتطياً ظهر الخطر لما يتوقّعه من لذّة الحمد ولو بعد الموت كأنّ تلك تصل إليه وهو ميّت

Ibn Sīnā's message that there are individuals who will forgo readily achievable sensory pleasures for the sake of other, non-sensory pleasures is one that he conveys consistently throughout his works:

Guidance

If a noble person were made to choose between a divine question remaining[5] incomprehensible to him and receiving the most pleasurable of sensible pleasures—no, all sensible pleasures—he would not choose [the latter], as the problem's being resolved would be the utmost of pleasures for him … Ponder the majority of people: Do they prefer having a natural, tangible, or sexual pleasure presented[6] [to them] over [avoiding] suffer-

ولو خيِّر الفاضل السيرة بين أن تبقى مسألة إلهيّة منغلقة عليه ويعوَّض ألذَّ لذّة حسّيّة بل كلّ لذّة حسّيّة لما آثرها فانحلالها عليه عنده في غاية اللذّة … فتأمّلْ أكثر الناس هل يؤثرون عرض لذّة طبيعيّة أو لمسيّة أو جماعيّة على احتمال نجل أو وقوع مستقبح على روؤس الملأ وإن لم يكن فيه ألم يعتدّ به فتراهم لا يحتملون ذلك ويحتملون

Sīnā's point, however, is not that such people immediately take advantage of opportunities to be generous, but that they gladly give things to others even though they had the right to benefit from those things; Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 468; Michot, "Joie et bonheur," 52.

4 *al-Išārāt*, VIII.1, 341.2–342.6.

5 Michot suggests that the text may be corrupted and proposes adding the negation *lā* before *tabqā*; Michot, "Eschatologie," 143n19. The sense of the passage, however, works without the negation; in fact, it better reinforces the point that someone would forgo sensory pleasures knowing that eventually resolving the intellectual problem would yield a far greater pleasure.

6 I follow Michot in reading *ʿarḍ* over the editor's *ǧaraḍ*. In similar passages, a verb with the root ʿ-r-ḍ appears in this context; see, for example, the prior passage in *Pointers* and the next passages from *Cure*/*Salvation* and *Philosophy*.

ing shame or disgrace in public view, even if in this there is not something [regularly] regarded as pain? You see them: They do not suffer that [experiencing disgrace], but they do suffer the demands of dominance and the dangers that will prompt [others] to remember [them], and they prefer this to any pleasure, indeed to life itself. This is even while they are immersed in [their] corporeal faculties. So do not give all this weight to sensible [pleasures]. Know that making oneself like eternal beings is a[n even] nobler position and [is even] more deserving of being desired than having fame or rejecting shame.[7]

دواعى الغلبة والأخطار المنبّهة للذكر على كلّ لذّة بل على الحياة هذا وهم مغمورون في القوى البدنيّة فلا تجعلْ للمحسوسات كلّ هذا الوزن واعلم أنّ التشبيه بالأبديّات أشرف موقعاً وأشدّ استحقاقاً للرغبة فيها من ذكر يحمل أو نجل يدفع

In this passage from the *Guidance*—one of Ibn Sīnā's earliest philosophical summae—we see a less straightforward, but still equivalent, presentation of the superiority of intellectual to sensible pleasures. Noble individuals would rather pursue a challenging intellectual problem than take immediate physical gratification, because the eventual intellectual reward represents the highest possible pleasure. Most people—the "commoners"—would forgo a sexual pleasure in order to avoid a public humiliation. They would prefer victory in battle, even in the face of danger, so that the public may remember their valiant deeds. This they prefer over any sensible pleasure, even over the preservation of their own lives, much like the example provided in the *Pointers*. Ibn Sīnā slightly refined how he expresses this in the *Cure/Salvation* and later in *Philosophy*, but the general scenario, some of the language (*Guidance*: *ḫuyyira*, *Cure/Salvation*: *ḫuyyirta*), and overall message remain the same: most people prefer intellectual pleasures over sensible ones; only those whose maturity is at the level of children or animals would choose otherwise.

7 *al-Hidāya*, III.6, 306.7–307.8. I follow the editor's punctuation of this passage over that adopted by Lizzini, who follows Michot in reading *wa-in lam yakun fī-hi alamun yu'taddu bi-hi* as the protasis of an independent conditional sentence; Lizzini, "Metafisica," 421; Michot, "Eschatologie," 144.

Cure, Salvation

You know that when you are contemplating something difficult to comprehend and some object of desire appears before you and you are made to choose between obtaining one or the other, you deem trivial [what appeals to] the appetite, if you are a noble soul. Even the souls of the masses abandon appetitive desires that are presented [to them] and prefer to suffer losses and burdensome pains in order to [avoid] ignominy, shame, corruption, or defamation. All of these are intellectual states which, along with their contraries, are preferred over natural desires and for whose sake hateful natural things are endured. From this it is known that, for the [rational] soul, intellectual ends are nobler than base things. However more so, then, when it comes to lofty, brilliant things?[8]

وأنت تعلم إذا تأمّلتَ عويصاً يهمّك وعرضت عليك شهوة وخُيّرتَ بين الظرفين استخففتَ بالشهوة إن كنتَ كريم النفس والأنفس العامّيّة أيضاً فإنّها تترك الشهوات المعترضة وتؤثر الغرامات والآلام الفادحة بسبب افتضاح أو خجل أو تغيير أو سوء قالة وهذه كلّها أحوال عقليّة تؤثر هي وأضدادها على المؤثرات الطبيعيّة ويصبر لها على المكروهات الطبيعيّة فيعلم من ذلك أنّ الغايات العقليّة أكرم على النفس من محقرات الأشياء فكيف في الأمور البهيّة العالية

Philosophy

Among the wise, the pleasures of internal faculties are superior, while among immature persons and [those with] low, base concerns, external pleasures are superior. If a person was offered, "Do you want something to eat, or high standing, pomp, greatness, respect, and victory over an enemy?", if he is of disgraceful and immature concerns, and in the position of children and animals, then he would want sweet food. But if he is a noble and refined person, he will never look at sweets, and he will not let that stand in place of another pleasurable thing.[9]

اندر خردمندان لذت قوتهای باطن غلبه دراد و بر خرد نفسان وفرود همتان و خسیسان خوشیهای ظاهر غلبه دارد اگر بر کسی عرضه کرده آید که چیزی خوردنی خوش خواهی یا محل و حشمت و بزر گداشت و غلبه بر دشمن اگر سقط و خرد همت بود و بمحل کود کان و چهارپایان شیرینی خواهد و اگر او را نفسی شریف ونفیس بود هر گز بشیرینی ننگرد و آن مر او را بجای آن دیگر چیز خوش نایستد

8 Trans. mod. from *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.7, 351.14–19; *al-Najāt*, 329.18–24. For what Ibn Sīnā means by "natural desires," see the discussion on *Pointers* VIII.19 below (section five). While this section appears nearly verbatim in the *Cure* and *Salvation*, this paragraph is omitted in *Lesser Destination*. The *Salvation* features another, similar passage on the superiority of intellectual pleasures; 282.15–16.

9 *Dānišnāma*, Ilāhiyyāt, 103.1–7; trans. mod. from Achena and Massé, *Le Livre de science*, I, 210.

While Ibn Sīnā dismisses animals as base in *Philosophy*, he concludes the opening section of *Pointers* VIII by adding that we see the rejection of sensory pleasure even within the animal kingdom; for example, when a hungry hunting dog chooses not to eat its prey, but rather to deliver it to its owner. With all of these examples at hand, he asks if internal pleasures—but not necessarily intellectual ones, as the ones discussed here are still associated with the animal soul—are preferred to external pleasures, how can intellectual pleasures not be the greatest of all pleasures?[10] He admonishes his reader to ignore those who wonder what pleasures and happiness there would be in this world (or the next) if it were not for food, drink, and sex.[11] He concludes this section by inveighing that such a doubter should have his eyes opened and be told that "perhaps the state of the angels and what is above them is more pleasurable, more joyous, and more comfortable than the state of cattle!"[12] Similar exhortations appear in several other of Ibn Sīnā's works:

Provenance and Destination

It is known that the pleasure and happiness [of the intellect] is above the pleasure of a donkey in sex and chewing [its food].[13]

ومعلوم أنّ اللذّة التي لها والسعادة فوق لذّة الحمار بالجماع والقضم

Immolation Destination

Praise God! Are the goods and pleasures that are proper to the substances of angels in any way comparable to the goods and pleasures that are proper to the substances of beasts?[14]

ويا سبحان الله هل الخير واللذّة التي تخصّ جواهر الملائكة تكون في قياس الخير واللذّة التي تخصّ جواهر البهائم والسباع

10 *al-Išārāt*, VIII.1, 342.7–11.

11 "We should not listen to he who says, 'If we were to reach a state in which we neither eat, nor drink, nor have sex, what happiness will there be for us?'" (*fa-lā yanbaġī an nastami'a ilā qawli man yaqūlu innā law ḥaṣṣalnā ʿalā ḥālatin lā na'kulu fī-hā wa-lā našrabu wa-lā nankaḥu fa-ayyatu saʿādatin takūnu la-nā*); VIII.2, 342.13–14. I follow Michot in reading *ḥāla* for *jumla*, as reported in MS F (Leiden 1064 Warn.) in Forget's apparatus; Michot, "Joie et bonheur," 33n21; Forget, *Le livre des théorèmes*, 191 note g. For an analysis of Ibn Sīnā's account of pleasure and his efforts to harmonize philosophical and religious views on the afterlife, see Stroumsa, "True Felicity." Stroumsa (66) translates this *taḏnīb* ("reproach") and suggests that it may be a response to a story told by Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī. In this story, he relates that his teacher, Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī, recounted a description of the afterlife that he heard from a Christian; it was an afterlife that involved no eating, drinking, or copulating.

12 *laʿalla l-ḥāla llatī li-l-malā'ikati wa-mā fawqa-hā alaḏḏu wa-abhaju wa-anʿamu min ḥāli l-anʿāmi*; *al-Išārāt*, VIII.2, 342.15–343.1.

13 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.14, 112.10; cf. trans. in Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge*, 60; cf. French trans. in Michot, *Genèse et Retour*, 75.

14 *al-Aḍḥawiyya*, VII, 149.8–10.

Lesser Destination, Cure, Salvation

The rational person should not assume that every pleasure is like what the donkey has in his belly and his crotch … Indeed, what comparison is there between lofty [pleasures] and these base ones [of donkeys and beasts]![15]

ولهذا يجب أن لا يتوهّم العاقل أنّ كلّ لذّة فهي كما للحمار في بطنه وفرجه … كلّى بل أيّ نسبة تكون لما للعالية إلى هذه الخسيسة

This first, brief section conveys a message that Ibn Sīnā emphasized consistently throughout his career. Intellectual pleasures are superior to corporeal pleasures. Any person of reason can see this; even the behavior of some animals, incapable of ratiocination, supports this. Anyone who thinks that the supreme pleasures of the afterlife compare with such base pleasures as sex and eating is a fool. Satisfied at having established this, Ibn Sīnā moves onto the trickier issue of explaining what pleasure and pain are.

2 The Nature of Pleasure and Pain

To begin refining his argument, Ibn Sīnā presents his reader with a definition of pleasure and pain (**VIII.3**):

Pleasure is attaining and acquiring an achievement of what to the attainer is a perfection and a good, insofar as it is a perfection and a good.[16] Pain is attaining and acquiring an achievement of what to the attainer is harmful and evil.[17]

إنّ اللذّة هي إدراك ونيل لوصولِ ما هو عند المُدرِك كمال وخير من حيث هو كذلك والألم هو إدراك ونيل لوصول ما هو عند المدرك آفة وشرّ

Here, Ibn Sīnā presents pleasure as consisting of several components: attainment (*idrāk*), acquisition (*nayl*), arrival/achievement (*wuṣūl*), good (*ḫayr*), and perfection (*kamāl*). Although this is the only instance I have found in which he

15 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XV, 129.2–7; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.7, 349.7–11; *al-Najāt*, 327.22–27.

16 A literal translation of *min ḥayṯu huwa ka-ḏālika* would be "insofar as it is like that." For the purposes of clarity, I translate this and similar phrases with the specific referent of the phrase.

17 *al-Išārāt*, VIII.3, 343.4–5. al-Mazīdī misreads the beginning of the second sentence in his edition of al-Āmidī's *Uncovering the Misrepresentations* as *wa-illā lima … wa-šarrun?*; Mazīdī (ed.), *Kašf al-tamwīhāt*, 309.12. McGinnis briefly discusses this passage and Ibn Sīnā's conceptions of pleasure, perfection, and happiness in *Avicenna*, 218–221.

defines pleasure in precisely this way, his discussions of many of the components are consistent throughout his corpus.

One of Ibn Sīnā's earliest pronouncements of the definition of pleasure appears in a simpler form in *Elements*: "Pleasure is the attainment of what is compatible."[18] This may reflect the incredible concision of *Elements* rather than an evolution in Ibn Sīnā's thinking, since all of the components of the more nuanced version that appears in the *Pointers* also appear in his *Epistle on Love*, which may precede *Elements*.[19] These components include attainment (*idrāk*) and acquisition (*nayl*) together with arriving (*yatawaṣṣal*) at their affective response (love [*ʿišq*]). When speaking of the First Being's love of Itself, he says,

إذ الخير يعشق الخير بما يتوصّل به إليه من نيله وإدراكه والخير الأوّل مدرك لذاته بالفعل أبدَ الدهر في الدهر فإذن عِشْقُه له أكمل عشق وأوفاه

since the good loves the good by means of the acquisition and attainment that lead it to arrive at it, and the First Good attains Itself in actuality eternally. Therefore, Its love of Itself is the most perfect and most complete love.[20]

Later in the *Epistle on Love*, Ibn Sīnā adduces attainment and acquisition as alternatives (without mentioning arrival), indicating that at this early point in his career he had not come to consistently refer to pleasure (*laḏḏa*) or love (*ʿišq*) as resulting from both an attainment and an acquisition.[21]

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18 *al-laḏḏa wa-huwa idrāku l-mulāʾimi*; *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 59.14. Cf. *Notes*, where Ibn Sīnā says that pain is the "sensation of something incompatible" (*al-alamu iḥsāsun bi-šayʾin ġayri mulāʾimin*); *al-Taʿlīqāt*, III.3, 92.6.

19 Ibn Sīnā wrote his *Epistle on Love* for his colleague al-Maʿṣūmī, who participated in his correspondence with al-Bīrūnī (ca. 1000). This dates the text to a very early period in his career; see Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 480. Elkaisy-Friemuth errs when she claims that the *Epistle* dates to shortly before the *Pointers*; Elkaisy-Friemuth, *God and Humans in Islamic Thought*, 75.

20 Mehren, *Traités Mystiques*, 1894, 3:5.3–5. Ibn Sīnā expresses the same sentiment about the First's love for Itself at the end of *Pointers* VIII; see below, Section 5. Fackenheim misses the technical and intellectual sense of *idrāk* and *mudrik*, translating them as "penetration" and "penetrates," respectively; Fackenheim, "A Treatise on Love," 214. Rundgren also misses the mark. Even though he first translates *idrāk* as "attainment," he fails to distinguish *idrāk* and *nayl*, and later translates *mudrik* as "reaching" rather than attaining; Rundgren, "Avicenna on Love," 54.

21 "Whenever anything with real existence *attains or acquires an acquisition* of something good, he naturally loves it in the manner of the animal souls' love for beautiful forms" (*kullu wāḥidin mina l-ašyāʾi l-ḥaqīqati l-wujūdi iḏā adraka aw nāla naylan mina l-ḫayrāti fa-inna-hu yaʿšiquhu bi-ṭibāʿihi ʿišqa l-nufūsi l-ḥayawāniyyati li-l-ṣuwari l-jamīlati*); Mehren, *Traités Mystiques*, 1894, 3:17.16–18.1; emphasis added; cf. trans. in Fackenheim, "A Treatise

Whereas the specific context of the *Epistle on Love* called for swapping pleasure for love (as does the similar context of *Pointers* VIII.18), other texts feature the familiar language of pleasure resulting from attainment, as well as the more laconic definition of pleasure as attaining what is compatible:

Provenance and Destination

Pleasure follows attainment, not the occurrence of perfection. Moreover, pleasure is the attainment of that which is compatible … Therefore, each pleasure and [whatever is] compatible for something is the good that is proper to it. The good that is proper to something is its perfection, which is its actuality, not its potentiality. What is compatible for the rational soul is to contemplate the Pure Good and what generates from it in the order in which It creates it, emanating one-by-one from the True One, and to contemplate Its essence. The rational soul's attaining this perfection is its pleasure.[22]

ثمّ اللذّة تتبع الإدراك لا حصول الكمال بل اللذّة هي إدراك الملائم … وكذلك كلّ لذّة وملائم كلّ شيء هو الخير الذي يخصّه والخير الذي يخصّ الشيء هو كماله الذي هو فعله لا قوّته فملائم النفس الناطقة تعقّل الخير المحض والموجودات الكائنة عنه على النظام الذي يجعلها فيـ[ـه] واحدة واحدة مستفاضة من الواحد الحقّ وتعقّل ذاته فإدراك النفس الناطقة لهذا الكمال هو لذّتها

Immolation Destination

Pleasure is the attainment of what is compatible. What is compatible pertains to the perfection of a thing's substance and the completion of its actuality. What is compatible for the senses[23] is what perfects or actualizes the sensory substance. And what is compatible for the ire, appetite, Imagination, cogitation, and Memory is analogous to this for each one of them.[24]

اللذّة هي إدراك الملائم والملائم هو الداخل في تكميل جوهر الشيء وتتميم فعله فالملائم الحسّيّ هو ما كمل جوهر الحاسّة أو فعلها والملائم الغضبيّ والشهوانيّ والتخيّليّ والفكريّ والذكريّ كلّ واحد على قياس ذلك

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on Love," 222. It is possible, of course, that the *aw* in *adraka aw nāla* is an error, and that it should be read as *wa*; only a proper edition will tell.

22 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.14, 110.16–111.7. I follow Michot in reading *mustafāḍa* for Nurānī's *mustafāda*; Michot, *Genèse et Retour*, 74.

23 Reading *al-ḥissiyyu* with MS Berlin 2734 (siglum *bāʾ*), MS Istanbul Nurosmaniye 4894_{99} (siglum *nūn*), and Sulaymān Dunyā's 1949 edition (siglum *dāl*), against the editor's *al-ḥasanu*; *al-Aḍḥawiyya*, 145n7.

24 VII, 145.6–10.

Cure, Salvation

Pleasure is naught but the attainment of that which is compatible insofar as it is compatible.[25]

فإنّ اللذّة ليست إلّا إدراك الملائم من جهة ما هو ملائم

Philosophy

Pleasure is the attainment of what is compatible.[26]

خوشی اندریافتِ اندرخور بود

For each faculty, pleasure is the attainment of that which it has power over and exists for. This thing is compatible with it.[27]

و هر قوّتی را خوشی اندریافتِ آنچیز بود که ویرا قوّت بروی است و از بهر وی است و آن چیز موافق وی است

While the familiar language conveys a certain measure of consistency, it is clear that Ibn Sīnā most often resorted to more concise definitions of pleasure as the attainment of what is compatible. The *Provenance and Destination* adds the nuance that pleasure follows attainment, but only the *Pointers* and *Epistle on Love* present Ibn Sīnā's fullest expositions of pleasure.

To ensure the clarity of this definition of pleasure in *Pointers* VIII.3, Ibn Sīnā then elaborates on the meaning and function of "good" and "perfection" saying,

Good and evil vary from one thing to another … every good in relation to a certain thing is the perfection that belongs to that thing, toward which it moves due to its primary disposition.[28]

وقد يختلف الخير والشرّ بحسب القياس … وكلّ خير بالقياس إلى شيء ما فهو الكمال الذي يختصّ به وينحوه باستعداده الأوّل

Here, as in some of the passages just quoted, Ibn Sīnā appears to establish an identity between what constitutes a good and a perfection. This appearance is strengthened by the examples of goods that he provides. Noting that what is considered good will vary based on the faculty in question, he suggests that something good with regard to the appetitive faculty may be agreeable food

25 *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.7, 297.12–13; *al-Najāt*, 282.8–9.

26 *Dānišnāma*, Ilāhiyyāt, § 37, 102.9–10; cf. French trans. in Achena and Massé, *Le Livre de science*, 209.

27 *Dānišnāma*, Ilāhiyyāt, § 37.103.15–104.1; cf. French trans. in Achena and Massé, *Le Livre de science*, 210.

28 *al-Išārāt*, VIII.3, 343.6–12.

or clothes; for the irascible faculty, dominance; for the intellect, the Truth, or beauty. He concludes this section, however, by providing a subtle hint that perfection and good are distinct concepts: "every pleasure is related to two things: a perfection that is a good, and the attainment of that insofar as it is good."[29]

Ibn Sīnā returns to the distinction between perfection and good later (**VIII.9**), stating, "Each pleasurable thing is the cause of a perfection that occurs in the attainer and which is a good in relation to him. Thus, we do not doubt that perfections and the attainment of them are distinct."[30] As an example, he mentions appetite (*šahwa*), stating that the organ of taste acquires the quality of sweetness from the matter in which that quality is found. In this case, the pleasurable thing is the sweet food, while the perfection is the acquisition and attainment of the quality of sweetness by the sense of taste. Another example that he provides is that of the irascible faculty, whose perfection involves acquiring some quality of victory (or dominance, *ġalaba*) or effecting pain in the object of its ire.[31] Whenever speaking of the pleasures that are proper to each faculty, be

29 *wa-kullu laḏḏatin fa-inna-hā tataʿallaqu bi-amrayni bi-kamālin ḫayriyyin wa-bi-idrākin lahu min ḫayṭu huwa ka-ḏālika*; VIII.3, 343.12–13. Wisnovsky, citing *Philosophy*, states that for Ibn Sīnā, "a thing's good (*nīkī*) is its perfection (*kamāl*);" *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*, 186n4. Although Ibn Sīnā does not state explicitly what "good" means here in the *Pointers*, he does so in the Metaphysics of the *Cure*, which he repeats in *Salvation*: "On the whole, 'good' is what each thing desires in respect of its definition and is that by which its existence is perfected" (*fa-l-ḫayru bi-l-jumlati huwa mā yatašawwaquhu kullu šay'in fī ḫaddihi wa-yatimmu bi-hi wujūduhu*); *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.6, 284.1; *al-Najāt*, 265.13–14; trans. slightly mod. from Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*, 185. Perfection is brought about via a good, but perfection and good are not identical.

30 *kullu mustaliḏḏin bi-hi fa-huwa sababu kamālin yaḥṣulu li-l-mudriki huwa bi-l-qiyāsi ilayhi ḫayrun ṭumma la našukku fī anna l-kamālāti wa-idrākātihā mutafāwitatun*; *al-Išārāt*, VIII.9, 345.12–13.

31 "The perfection of the appetite, for example, is such that the organ of taste acquires the quality of sweetness, which is taken from the matter [which has that quality]. If such were to occur [but] not from an external cause, pleasure would remain; likewise for the object of touch, smell, and the likes of them. The perfection of the irascible faculty is such that the soul acquires the quality of victory or the quality of perceiving harms that occur in the object of ire. The perfection of the Estimation is the acquisition of the figuration of something that it anticipates or recalls. It is the same for the remainder of the faculties" (*fa-kamālu l-šahwati maṭalan an yatakayyafa l-ʿuḍwu l-ḏāʾiqu bi-kayfiyyati l-ḫilāwati maʾḫūḏatan ʿan māddatihā wa-law waqaʿa miṯlu ḏālika lā ʿan sababin ḫārijin kānati l-laḏḏatu qāʾimatan wa-ka-ḏālika l-malmūsu wa-naḥwuhuma wa-kamālu l-quwwati l-ġaḍabiyyati an tatakayyafa l-nafsu bi-kayfiyyati ġalabatin aw kayfiyyati šuʿūrin bi-aḏan yaḥṣulu fī l-maġḍūbi ʿalay-hi wa-li-l-wahmi l-takayyufu bi-hayʾati mā yarjūhu aw mā yaḏkuruhu waʿalā hāḏā ḥālu sāʾiri l-quwā*); VIII.9, 345.13–346.4. I follow Michot in reading *wa-li-l-wahmi* with Forget over Zāriʿī's *wa-kamālu l-wahmi*; Michot, "Joie et bonheur," 55; Forget, *Le livre des théorèmes*, 194.3.

it here in the *Pointers* or elsewhere, Ibn Sīnā routinely refers to concepts such as revenge, dominance, or victory (*intiqām*, *ġalaba*, or *ẓafar*) as the pleasures proper to the irascible faculty (*al-ġaḍab*), food and sex as the pleasures of the appetitive faculty (*al-šahwa*), and anticipation (*al-rajāʾ*) for the Estimation.

Provenance and Destination

The perfection and happiness of the appetite is pleasure. The perfection and happiness of the ire is dominance. [For] the Estimation, it is anticipation and wishing [for something]. [For] the Imagination, it is Imagining things deemed good.[32]

كمال الشهوة وسعادتها هو اللذّة وكمال الغضب وسعادتها هو الغلبة والوهم الرجاء والتمنّي والخيال تخيّل المستحسنات

Elements

What is compatible is what is superior in relation to something, like something sweet for [the faculty of] taste, light for vision, dominance for ire, anticipation[33] for the Estimation, and recollection for Memory.[34]

والملائم هو الفاضل بالقياس إلى الشيء كالحلو عند الذوق والنور عند البصر والغلبة عند الغضب والرجاء عند الوهم والذكر عند الحفظ

Lesser Destination, Cure, Salvation

You should know that for each faculty of the soul, there is a pleasure and a good that is proper to it, and a pain and an evil that is proper to it. An example is that pleasure and good for the appetite is that compatible sensible qualities arrive to it from the five [external senses]. Pleasure for the [faculty] of ire is victory. Pleasure for the Estimation is anticipation. And pleasure for the Memory is recalling agreeable past events … Each of them [the faculties] shares in some manner in being aware [that] what is agreeable and compatible for it is the good and pleasure that is proper to it.

يجب أن تعلم أنّ لكلّ قوّة نفسانيّة لذّةً وخيراً يخصّها وأذىً وشرّاً يخصّها مثاله أنّ لذّة الشهوة وخيرها أن يتأدّى إليها كيفيات محسوسة ملائمة من الخمسة ولذّة الغضب الظفر ولذّة الوهم الرجاء ولذّة الحفظ تذكّر الأمور الموافقة الماضية … وتشترك كلّها نوعاً من الشركة في أنّ الشعور

32 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.14, 109.12–13; French trans. in Michot, *Genèse et Retour*, 73.

33 Emending *al-raḫāʾ* for *al-rajāʾ*, given the latter's appearance in similar passages in *Pointers, Lesser Destination, Cure, Salvation,* and *Guidance*.

34 *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 59.14–16.

What is compatible in essence and reality to each one of them is the occurrence of the perfection that is, in relation to it, its perfection in actuality.[35]

بموافقها وملائمها هو الخير واللذّة الخاصّة بها وموافق كلّ واحد منها بالذات والحقيقة هو حصول الكمال الذي هو بالقياس إليه كمال بالفعل

Guidance

Just as the perfection of every attaining [faculty] is the occurrence of its compatible object of attainment, consider pleasure [for] the appetite, dominance [for] the ire, and anticipation [for] the Estimation.[36]

وكما أنّ كمال كلّ مدرك حصول مدركه الملائم له اعتبر لذّة الشهوة وغلبة الغضب ورجاء الوهم

Philosophy

What is compatible for each faculty is whatever agrees with its function without harm: for [the faculty of] ire, it is dominance; for the appetite, it is tasty [food].[37]

اندرخور هر قوّتی آن بود که موافق فعل وی بود بی آفت خشم را غلبه وشهوت را مزه

Despite the overall consistency, there are some variations in how Ibn Sīnā presents compatible pleasures for each faculty. In *Provenance and Destination* and *Guidance*, he speaks of pleasure as being compatible for the appetite, whereas he typically adduces food. In *Pointers*, he associates both anticipation and recollection with Estimation, whereas elsewhere he places recollection with Memory. More challenging, however, is the seemingly blurred line between something compatible (*mulāʾim*), a good (*ḫayr*), and a perfection (*kamāl*). What is compatible for a given faculty is better for it in relation to something else (*Elements*), facilitates its perfection and actualization (*Immolation Destination*), and does not cause it harm (*Philosophy*). As for perfection and good, while there may be significant overlap between what constitutes each of them, they are nevertheless distinct. What is a perfection is not always a good, hence the use of the qualifier in *idrāk ḫayrī* in the passage from *Point-*

35 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XV, 128.3–8; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.7, 348.9–14; *al-Najāt*, 327.5–11. In a passage in the De Anima of the *Cure*, Ibn Sīnā observes that pleasure for the faculty of ire is dominance (*ġalaba*), while elsewhere in the Metaphysics of the *Cure* (repeated in *Salvation*), he says it is revenge (*intiqām*); *Avicenna's De Anima*, I.5, 41.11–12; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.7; *al-Najāt*, 282.24.

36 *al-Hidāya*, III.6, 300.4–301.1.

37 *Dānišnāma*, Ilāhiyyāt, §37, 102.11–12; cf. French trans. in Achena and Massé, *Le Livre de science*, 209–210.

ers VIII.3 translated above. Additionally, whether perfections are also goods is relational, meaning they will vary from person to person and circumstance to circumstance.

After addressing the distinction between perfection and good, Ibn Sīnā then discusses the perfection of the intellecting substance (*al-jawhar al-ʿāqil*)[38] (**VIII.9**).

كمال الجوهر العاقل أن تتمثّل فيه جليّة الحقّ الأوّل قدر ما يمكنه أن ينال منه ببهائه الذي يخصّه ثمّ يتمثّل فيه الوجود كلّه على ما هو عليه مجرّداً عن الشوب مبتدءاً فيه بعد الحقّ الأوّل بالجواهر العقليّة العالية ثمّ الروحانيّة السماويّة والأجرام السماويّة ثمّ ما بعد ذلك تمثّلاً لا يمايز الذات فهذا هو الكمال الذي يصير به الجوهر العقليّ بالفعل

The perfection of the intellecting substance is such that the clarity of the First Truth is represented in it [intellecting substance] to the extent that it is able to acquire from it [First Truth] the brilliance that is appropriate to it. Then, existence in its entirety is represented in it just as it is, free from [material] admixture. After the First Truth, [the representation] begins with the high intellectual substances, then the celestial, spiritual [beings] and the celestial bodies, then what comes after that. [This occurs] in a representation that is not distinct from the essence. This is the perfection by which the intellecting substance becomes actual.[39]

This is precisely what Ibn Sīnā says in the *Lesser Destination* and repeats in the *Cure* and *Salvation* regarding the perfection of the rational soul:

إنّ النفس الناطقة كمالها الخاصّ بها أن تصير عالَماً عقليّاً مرتسماً فيها صورة الكلّ والنظام المعقول في الكلّ والخير الفائض في الكلّ مبتدئة

The proper perfection of the rational soul is for it to become an intellectual universe[40] in which there is impressed the universe, its intelligible order, and the good that emanates

38 By intellecting substance Ibn Sīnā means the human rational soul.

39 *al-Išārāt*, VIII.9, 346.5–9. Michot proposes reading *yumāyir* for *yumāyiz*: "an appearance that does not fall short of imitating the essence;" Michot, "Joie et bonheur," 56n42. While this presents an interesting reading, it differs little in meaning from *yumāyiz*, and there is no manuscript attesting it.

40 On the meaning of "intellectual universe" and its relation to Ibn Sīnā's conception of pleasure in the afterlife, see Lizzini, "Avicenna: The Pleasure of Knowledge." McGinnis has pointed out that the phrase "intellectual universe" (*ʿālaman ʿaqliyyan*) could also be read as "an intellectual knower" (*ʿāliman ʿaqliyyan*). He argues that this phrase is likely a reference to the *Theology of Aristotle*, itself an epitome of Plotinus's *Enneads*,

من مبدأ الكلّ سالكة إلى الجواهر الشريفة الروحانيّة المطلقة ثمّ الروحانيّة المتعلّقة نوعاً ما بالأبدان ثمّ الأجسام العلوية بهيئاتها وقواها ثمّ كذلك حتّى تستوفي في نفسها هيئة الوجود كلّه

through it, beginning with the Principle of the universe and journeying to the noble, completely spiritual substances, then to the spiritual [substances] that have some kind of relation with bodies, then the supernal bodies and their figurations and faculties, then likewise until the [rational] soul fully receives the figuration of the universe in its entirety.[41]

Returning to **VIII.4–5**, Ibn Sīnā raises a possible objection: namely, that there are perfections and goods the attainment of which yields relatively little pleasure, if any at all. For example, one does not find pleasure in health and safety in the same way that one finds pleasure in eating sweets. In addressing this hypothetical objection, he reminds his reader that pleasure requires both the occurrence (*ḥuṣūl*) of the pleasurable thing and awareness (*šuʿūr*) of it. Yet, when certain sensible objects or qualities persist for an extended period of

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wherein the idea of intellectual universe is found; McGinnis, *Avicenna*, 276n7. A short passage in *Immolation Destination*, in which the plural of "universe" appears, confirms that we should read the singular as *ʿālam* instead of *ʿālim*: "Its [rational soul's] perfection is to become universes unblemished from change and multiplicity in which there is the image of every existent abstracted from matter" (*kamālātihā an taṣīra ʿawālima munazzahatan ʿani l-taġayyuri wa-l-takaṯṯuri fī-hā ṣūratu kulli mawjūdin mujarradatin ʿani l-māddati*); *al-Aḍḥawiyya*, VII, 148.11–13. In *Elements*, which may predate *Immolation*, Ibn Sīnā merely speaks of "a form of the universe be[ing] conceptualized in the rational soul" (*li-yakūna ṣūratun li-l-kulli mutaṣawwiratan fī l-nafsi l-nāṭiqati*); *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 60.9.

41 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XV, 130.10–131.1; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.7, 350.8–11; *al-Najāt*, 328.17–21; cf. trans. in Stroumsa, "True Felicity," 59, with reference to the *Lesser Destination* and *Salvation*. One may think of this as the perfected rational soul becoming a microcosm of the cosmos; cf. the translation in Shihadeh, "From Al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī," 175–176. Ibn Sīnā says roughly the same earlier in the *Cure/Salvation*: "Know that each faculty's pleasure is the occurrence of its perfection … For the rational soul, [this is] its becoming an intellectual universe in actuality" (*wa-ʿlam anna laḏḏata kulli quwwatin ḥuṣūlu kamālihā la-hā … wa-li-l-nafsi l-nāṭiqati maṣīruhā ʿālaman ʿaqliyyan bi-l-fiʿli*); *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.7, 298.11–13; *al-Najāt*, 282.23–26. He is much more concise in the *Provenance and Destination*: "The rational soul's happiness is in the perfection of its essence in the manner that is proper to it. [This] is its becoming an intellectual universe" (*fa-saʿādatu l-nafsi fī kamāli ḏātihā mina l-jihati llatī taḫuṣṣuhā huwa ṣayrūratuhā ʿālaman ʿaqliyyan*); *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.14, 110.13–14; cf. Michot, *Genèse et Retour*, 74. Ibn Sīnā expresses the same idea in *Guidance*, although the editor incorrectly emended "universe" (*ʿālaman*) to "its knowledge" (*ʿilmuhā*); *al-Hidāya*, III.6, 301.2 n2; on the errant emendation, see Michot, "Eschatologie," 141n12. On the soul's becoming an intellectual universe, see Michot, *Destinée*, 96–99.

time—say, for instance, good health—one may no longer be aware of them. Thus, despite associating good health with pleasure, if one is no longer aware of one's good health, one cannot experience pleasure from it. This is different from pleasure not being associated with good health at all. A similar hypothetical objection is that someone may acquire something pleasurable, but dislike it. As an example, Ibn Sīnā mentions a sick person who dislikes eating sweets (an acknowledged pleasure). However, he states that this poses no problem to his argument, referring his reader back to the definition of good, which is relative in nature.[42] In this circumstance, the sick person does not perceive the sweet food as a good.[43]

Regarding the relative nature of what constitutes a good, we may compare what Ibn Sīnā has said here to what he says in *Provenance and Destination*:

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42 *al-Išārāt*, VIII.4–5, 343–344. The example of someone disliking sweet food appears nearly verbatim in the *Pointers* and *Lesser Destination/Cure/Salvation*: *karāhiyyat baʿḍi l-marḍā l-ṭaʿma l-ḥilwa*; *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XV, 129.11; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.7, 349.15; *al-Najāt*, 328.4–5. The word *al-ṭaʿm* is omitted in the *Pointers*. This point is also addressed in *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.7, 298.5–6; *al-Najāt*, 282.17–18.

43 Ibn Sīnā also reverses the phenomenon in *Philosophy*. Through habituation and familiarity one can come to find a previously displeasing food to be pleasurable. In other words, some things are an acquired taste; *Dānišnāma*, Ilāhiyyāt, 107.3–5. Inati objects to Ibn Sīnā's statement that "[the pleasurable object] is not a good in this state;" Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 12. She suggests that one would expect him to have said "such objects are not pleasurable in this state." This is because, she says, "to him, awareness that something is good is necessary for that thing to be pleasurable and not for it to be good. In no place does he assert that a thing cannot be good for another unless that other is aware of the goodness of the former to it. On the contrary, he makes clear that it is possible for a human being, for example, to be unaware that it is good for him to know such and such, but that this unawareness has no impact on the goodness of the person's knowing such and such for him. One can only assume that the word 'good' in the phrase 'such objects are not good in this state' is the result of negligence either on the part of Ibn Sīnā or on the part of his scribes." I disagree with Inati's assessment that the terminology in the *Pointers* must be the result of carelessness, be it Ibn Sīnā's or a scribe's. In VIII.3, Ibn Sīnā states that pleasure "is attaining and acquiring an achievement of *what to the attainer is a perfection and a good, insofar as it is a perfection and a good*" (my emphasis). To assert that what is a good (and a perfection) is fixed in all circumstances is to ignore this statement. We should not assume that Ibn Sīnā purports all things that are a good in one circumstance to be essentially good, i.e., to be a good regardless of circumstances. In Ibn Sīnā's example of the sick individual, it is clear that sweet food is not a perfection in that circumstance and, as such, sweet food would not be perceived as such; therefore, it is intrinsically neither good nor pleasurable.

It is possible that the perfection that naturally belongs to something reaches that something, occurs to it, and is attained by it, but [that something] does not derive pleasure from it. Or, [it is possible that something] desires and is pleased by something that is not really pleasurable [to it] on account of an external cause. [This is] because this [cause] is an external thing to it, not internal. Thus, its cause is an external accident, naturally. This is like when a harm occurs to the sense of taste, it does not find sweetness to be good and is not pleased by it. At times, it desires food that it is not actually pleasurable to it. The same goes for [the sense of] smell and odors. The reason for this is that it is not aware of what is compatible.[44]

وقد يجوز أن يكون الكمال الذي للشيء بالطبع قد يصل إليه ويحصل له ويدركه فلا يلتذّ به أو يشتهي ويلتذّ ما ليس بالحقيقة لذيذاً لسبب خارج لأنّ هذا أمر غريب غير ذاتيّ له فسببه عارض غريب لا محالة وهذا مثل ما أنّ الحاسّة الذوقيّة إذا عرض لها آفة لم تستطب الحلو ولم تلتذّ به وربّما اشتهت من الطعوم ما ليس لذيذاً بالحقيقة وكذلك الشمّ للروائح والسبب في ذلك أن لا تشعر بالملائمة

He later adds that even a person with a bulimic hunger (*jawʿ būlīmūs*)[45] would not crave food on account of being ill; illness being the external cause for the inability to receive pleasure from something that is normally a good.[46] Ibn Sīnā had already put the example of bulimic hunger to work in a similar discussion in *Elements* and repeats it yet again in *Guidance* and *Philosophy*.[47]

Seeking to clarify the explanation (**VIII.6–7**), Ibn Sīnā further adds that for the attainer to attain the pleasurable object, he must be healthy and free from distractions and contradictions, or else it is possible that he would not be aware of the occurrence of something that he would otherwise perceive as pleasurable. By way of example with regard to the need to be healthy, he returns to the case of the sick person who finds displeasure in eating sweet food. As for being free from distraction or preoccupation, he mentions someone who is uncomfortably satiated and therefore rejects an offer of even more food, however

44 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.14, 111.8–13.

45 Bulimic in the sense of a ravenous appetite, not to be confused with the modern condition known as *bulimia nervosa*, an eating disorder characterized by binge eating.

46 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.14, 114.1–2; French trans. in Michot, *Genèse et Retour*, 76.

47 *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 60.1; *al-Hidāya*, III.6, 302.4–5; French trans. in Michot, "Eschatologie," 141; Italian trans. in Lizzini, "Metafisica," 419; *Dānišnāma*, Ilāhiyyāt, § 37, 108.2; French trans. in Achena and Massé, *Le Livre de science*, I, 213.

delicious it may be. Ibn Sīnā adds that the same situation obtains with regard to pain. If the cause of pain is present, but one does not perceive it—e.g., in the case of someone who has been anesthetized[48]—one does not perceive the displeasure that is normally associated with pain. However, when the impediment to perceive the pain (e.g., the anesthetic) subsides, one will perceive the presence of pain, and therefore will experience the displeasure associated with it.[49]

This is much the same as what Ibn Sīnā says with regard to the functioning of the intellectual faculty in *Lesser Destination*, *Cure*, and *Salvation*:

وأنت تعلم أنّ الحسّ يمنع النفس عن التعقّل فإنّ النفس إذا أكبت على المحسوس شغلت عن المعقول من غير أن يكون أصاب آلةَ العقل أو ذاتها آفةٌ بوجه وتعلم أنّ السبب في ذلك هو اشتغال النفس بفعل دون فعل فلهذا السبب ما تتعطّل أفعال العقل عند المرض

You know that the senses prevent the [rational] soul from intellectual activity, for when the soul devotes itself to a sensible object, it is distracted from intellectual objects, without the intellect's instrument—or the soul itself—having been stricken by some harm in any way. And you know that the reason for this is the soul's being distracted by one activity at the expense of another. For this reason, the intellect's activities cease during illness.[50]

Ibn Sīnā next adds the stipulation that, although one may be able to affirm a certain kind of pleasure with certainty, it is not possible for one to desire (*šawq*) that very pleasure without the notion that he calls "Taste" (*ḏawq*) (VIII.8).[51]

إنّه قد يصحّ إثبات لذّة ما يقيناً ولكن إذا لم يقع المعنى الذي يسمّى ذوقاً جاز أن لا نجد إليه شوقاً وكذلك قد يصحّ ثبوت أذىً ما يقيناً ولكن إذا

It may be that one can affirm a certain pleasure with certainty. But, when there does not occur the notion that is called "Taste," it is possible for us to not experience a desire for this

48 Ibn Sīnā similarly adduces the example of anesthesia in the relevant discussion in *Provenance and Destination*, *Elements*, *Guidance*, and *Philosophy*; *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.14, 114.1; French trans. in Michot, *Genèse et Retour*, 76; *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 59.22; *al-Hidāya*, III.6, 302.1; French trans. in Michot, "Eschatologie," 141; Italian trans. in Lizzini, "Metafisica," 419; *Dānišnāma*, Ilāhiyyāt, 107.13; French trans. in Achena and Massé, *Le Livre de science*, I, 212.

49 *al-Išārāt*, VIII.6–7, 344–345.

50 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, VII, 94.10–13; *Avicenna's De Anima*, V.2, 220.12–17; *al-Najāt*, 220.2–5. Cf. Rahman's translation of this passage in his *Avicenna's Psychology*, 54.

51 For a more detailed analysis of Ibn Sīnā's use of *ḏawq*, see Rapoport, "Sufi Vocabulary, but Avicennan Philosophy," 169–176.

[pleasure]. Likewise, one can affirm a certain pain with certainty. But when there does not occur the notion that is called "Suffering," it is possible that there does not occur an extreme wariness of it.[52]

لم يقع المعنى الذي يسمّى بالمقاساة كان في الجواز أن لا يقع عنها بالغ الاحتراز

Although the language of this reminder is straightforward, Ibn Sīnā's notion of Taste is frequently misunderstood. Cyrus Ali Zargar, saying that here Ibn Sīnā acknowledges what appears to be a non-rational or supra-rational means of knowledge acquisition, describes Taste as "reference to a direct experience of the supersensory akin to inspiration."[53] Meryem Sebti and Lobel both see Ibn Sīnā's use of Taste as mystical mode of acquiring knowledge.[54]Ali Humayun Akhtar calls it "a concept that reoriented intellectual conjunction as a primer for moving beyond the Active Intellect into the realm of self-diminishing experiential ecstasy amidst God's immanence."[55] It is no such thing. Aside from Taste not having anything to do with mysticism or Sufism, what such interpretations miss is that it is not a term that Ibn Sīnā used for acquiring knowledge.

To clarify the notion of Taste, Ibn Sīnā mentions as an example a congenitally impotent person who has never experienced the pleasure of sexual intercourse.[56] This is an example that he frequently turns to in his works. In the context of establishing the superiority of intellectual pleasure over sensory pleasure in *Provenance and Destination*, he states, "An impotent person does not crave or long for sex, for he has not experienced it and does not know it, even though induction and uninterrupted reports inform him of its existence and indicate to him that there is pleasure in sex."[57] In *Guidance*, he asserts that an impotent person's inability to conceptualize the pleasure of sex does not

52 *al-Išārāt*, VIII.8, 345.6–8

53 Zargar, *Polished Mirror*, 57.

54 Lobel, *Between Mysticism and Philosophy*, 101; Sebti, "La notion de *mušāhada*," 160, 165–166.

55 Akhtar, *Philosophers, Sufis, and Caliphs*, 221.

56 "An example of the former [pleasure]: The state of the naturally impotent person with regard to [experiencing] the pleasure of sexual intercourse. An example of the latter [pain]: the state of one who has not endured long-term illness upon [experiencing] a fever" (*miṭālu l-awwali ḥālu l-ʿinnīni ḥilqatan ʿinda laḏḏati l-jimāʿi wa-miṭālu l-ṯāniy ḥālu man lam yuqāsi waṣba l-asqāmi ʿinda l-ḥimyati*); *al-Išārāt*, VIII.8, 345.9–10.

57 *al-ʿinnīnu fa-inna-hu lā yaḥinnu ilā laḏḏati l-jimāʿi wa-lā yaštahīhi li-anna-hu lam yujarribhu wa-lam yaʿrifhu wa-in kāna l-istiqrāʾu wa-l-tawāturu yuʿarrifuhu wujūda ḏālika wa-yadullu ʿalā anna hāhunā li-l-jimāʿi laḏḏatan*; *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.14, 112.13–15; cf. trans. in Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge*, 60–61; cf. French trans. in Michot, *Genèse et Retour*, 75.

negate his ability to believe that sex is pleasurable.[58] Similarly, in the *Cure* he states, "As long as one is not aware of it [a pleasure], one does not desire it, nor is one drawn toward it. For example, an impotent person. He has ascertained that there is pleasure in sex, but neither does he long for it, **nor does he experience the craving and longing that are proper to it.**" This passage first appears in a slightly different form in *Lesser Destination* and reappears in *Salvation*. One also finds a similar passage in *Immolation Destination*.[59]

For Ibn Sīnā, then, an impotent person can learn of the pleasures of sex discursively, but is unlikely ever to desire it on account of his inability to experience the pleasure associated with it. Much the same can be said with regard to pain. One can discursively affirm a pain with certainty, but if one has not experienced "suffering" (*muqāsāt*, the negative corollary to Taste), one may not be particularly wary of an object that causes that pain. The example in this case is one who has not endured a long-term illness. Without having such a prior experience, this person has no cause to be wary upon having a fever.[60] As Janssens puts it, Ibn Sīnā's use of Taste (*ḏawq*) indicates that a "profound experience … is needed in order to be attracted to the pleasurable or, inversely, to avoid the painfully [*sic*]."[61] Taste is not a means of knowledge acquisition, nor does it refer, as Elamrani-Jamal suggests, to a state of inspiration that, together with volition, leads the knower to contact with the active intellect.[62]

Having discussed the nature of pleasure and pain, and the requisites for them to occur, Ibn Sīnā proceeds to refine his original proposition that internal pleasures are greater than external pleasures, and that intellectual pleasures are the greatest of the internal pleasures (**VIII.9**).

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58 *al-Hidāya*, III.6, 306.3–5; French trans. in Michot, "Eschatologie," 143; Italian trans. in Lizzini, "Metafisica," 421.

59 *wa-mā lam yašʿur bi-hi lam yaštaq ilay-hi wa-lam yanziʿ naḥwa-hu miṯlu l-ʿinnīni fa-inna-hu mutaḥaqqiqun anna li-l-jimāʿi laḏḏatan wa-lākinna-hu la yaštahīhi wa-lā yaḥinnu naḥwa-hu l-ištihāʾa wa-l-ḥinīna llaḏayni yakūnāni maḥṣūṣayni bi-hi*; *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XV, 128.14–129.1; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.7, 349.2–4; *al-Najāt*, 327.17–19; *al-Aḍḥawiyya*, VII, 150.2–6. Marmura's edition of the *Cure* reads *li-l-majmāʿ* where all the other texts read *li-l-jimāʿi*; I take this latter as being correct. The part in bold does not appear in the *Lesser Destination*. Ibn Sīnā also produces as an example the blind upon being presented with beautiful images, a deaf person being presented with musical sounds, and a bilious person rejecting sweet food (*Immolation* only).

60 *al-Išārāt*, VIII.8, 346.10–12. Inati exaggerates Ibn Sīnā's statement when she says that "a person who has not experienced having a fever does not find having a fever painful;" *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 13.

61 Janssens, "Philosophical Mysticism," 40.

62 Elamrani-Jamal, "Vision contemplative," 150.

والإدراك العقليّ خالص إلى الكنه عن الشوب والحسّيّ شوب كلّه وعدد تفاصيل العقليّ لا يكاد يتناهى والحسّيّة محصورة في قلّة وإن كثرت فبالأشدّ والأضعف

Intellectual attainment reaches the unadulterated essence, while sensory [attainment] is entirely [the attainment of material] adulteration. The number of distinct intellectual objects is almost unlimited, while the [objects of the] senses are limited to a small number; if they are subject to increase, it is by the more intense and the weaker.[63]

By way of example, Ibn Sīnā adduces the intellecting substance's being able to represent the First Truth and, by extension, all of existence, as its proper perfection; this occurs in a "representation that is not distinct from the essence" of the First Truth and of what follows it, namely the celestial intellects, souls, and bodies.[64]

Similar claims to the superiority of the intellect are familiar from many of Ibn Sīnā's other works:

Provenance and Destination

مدرَك العقل هو الكلّ ومدرَك الحسّ بعض من الكلّ والحسّ بعض الأشياء المحسوسة ينافيه وبعضها يلائمه والعقل وكلّ مُدرَك معقول يلائمه ويكمل ذاته

The intellect's object of attainment is the whole, while the senses' object of attainment is part of the whole. Some sensible things are antithetical to the senses, while some of them are compatible for it. But all intelligible objects of attainment are compatible for the intellect and perfect its essence.[65]

Immolation Destination

ثمّ إدراكها أفضل من إدراك الحاسّات لأنّ إدراك النفس يقينيّ كلّيّ ضروريّ أبديّ وإدراك الحسّ ظاهريّ جزئيّ زواليّ ثمّ مدركاتها الملائمة أفضل لأنّ مدركاتها المعاني الثابتة والصور

The [rational soul's] attainment is superior to that of the senses because the [object of the rational] soul's attainment is certain, universal, necessary, and eternal, while the [object of the] senses' attainment is external, particular, and temporary. The compatible objects of

63 *al-Išārāt*, VIII.9, 346.10–12. That is to say, while sensible objects can vary significantly in qualitative terms (e.g., more intense or weaker), they will nonetheless always be limited in quantitative terms.

64 *tamaṯṯulan lā yumāyizu l-ḏāta*; VIII.9, 346.8.

65 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.14, 112.3–5.

[the rational soul's] attainment are superior because its objects of attainment are the fixed notions, the spiritual forms, the First Principle of all existence in Its exaltedness and greatness, the lordly angels, and the realities of the celestial and elemental bodies and their essences.[66]

الروحانيّة والمبدأ الأوّل للوجود كلّه في جلاله وعظم شأنه والملائكة الربّانيّة وحقائق الأجرام السماويّة والعنصريّة وذواتها

Elements

All of these [sensory attainments] are deficient, while the rational soul's attainment is superior ... The rational soul's attainment of the First Truth—which is the perfector, nay principle, of all existence, and is pure good—is the most pleasurable thing.[67]

وهذه كلّها ناقصة الإدراك والنفس الناطقة فاضلة الإدراك ... فإدراك النفس الناطقة للحقّ الأوّل الذي هو المكمّل لكلّ وجود بل المبتدئ وهو الذي هو الخير المحض ألذّ شيء

Lesser Destination, Cure, Salvation

[The rational soul] is greatest in terms of the number of objects of attainment, the strongest at examining the object of attainment, abstracting it from superfluous appurtenances that are attributed to it only as accidents, and diving into both its interior and exterior. Indeed, how can one compare this [intellectual] attainment with that [sensory] attainment?[68]

فإنّه أكثر عدد مدركات وأشدّ تقصّياً للمدرك وتجريداً له عن الزوائد الغير الداخلة في معناه إلّا بالعرض والخوض في باطنه وظاهره بل كيف يقاس هذا الإدراك بذلك الإدراك

Guidance

The rational [soul]'s attainment is superior, its object of attainment loftier and more intense in terms of [the soul's] penetration [of it], therefore its pleasure ... is grander.[69]

والناطقة إدراكها أفضل ومدرَكها أجلّ وأشدّ وغولاً فلذّتها ... أعظم

66 *al-Aḍḥawiyya*, VII, 148.4–10.

67 *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 59.16–19.

68 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XV, 131.11–13; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.7, 351.3–5; *al-Najāt*, 329.6–9. Unlike the *Cure* and *Salvation*, *Lesser Destination* does not explicitly mention the rational soul (*al-nafs al-nuṭqiyya*).

69 *al-Hidāya*, III.6, 301.3–5.

Cure, Salvation

It should be known that the intellect's attainment of an intelligible object is stronger than the sense's attainment of a sensory object because it—I mean the intellect—intellects and attains the thing that is enduring and universal. It unites with it and becomes it (in a manner of speaking), attaining it in its essence, not its surface. It is not the same for the senses and the sensibles.[70]

ويجب أن يعلم أنّ إدراك العقل للمعقول أقوى من إدراك الحسّ للمحسوس لأنّه أعني العقل يعقل ويدرك الأمر الباقي الكلّيّ ويتّحد به ويصير هو هو على وجه ما ويدركه بكنهه لا بظاهره وليس كذلك الحسّ للمحسوس

Philosophy

The intellect sees abstract things, such that it sees it as it is or it does not see it in any way. While the senses see only base accidents receptive of change, the intellect sees only unchangeable substances and attributes. It sees that thing from which all goodness, order, and happiness come. In what manner, then, is the state of happiness of the intellect's attaining the First Truth, that from which all beauty, order, and brilliance exists? How can this happiness be compared with sensory happiness?[71]

عقل چیز را مجرد بیند وچنان بیند که هست یا خود هیچگونه نبیند و حس مر عرضهای خسیس تغیر پذیرد را بیند و عقل مر گوهرها وصفتهاي نا گردنده را بیند و آنچیز را بیند که نیکویی و نظام و خوشی همه از وی آید پس چگونه بود حال خوشی اندریافت عقل مر حق اول را آنرا که همه جمال و نظام و بهاء از وی است و آن خوشی را باین خوشی حسی چه قیاس بود

Pleasure involves the attainment and arrival of something compatible that is both a good and a perfection to the attainer; pain is the inverse, attaining and arriving at something incompatible. Ibn Sīnā had stock examples that he relied on to clarify this throughout his career. For corporeal faculties like the appetite and ire, sweets and dominance are compatible. For the rational soul's intellectual faculty, universal truths are compatible. Insofar as these faculties naturally

70 *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.7, 298.1–3; *al-Najāt*, 282.12–15. The same passage appears in *Provenance and Destination*, but without the caveat "in a manner of speaking;" *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, I.12, 18.7–9. I address this passage in relation to the question of the soul's mystical union with the divine in chapter 5.

71 *Dānišnāma*, Ilāhiyyāt, § 37, 106.4–9. Cf. French translation in Achena and Massé, *Le Livre de science*, I, 212. Morewedge sees this passage as an example of "union (*paiwand*) between certain aspects of the self and the Necessary Existent;" "Neoplatonic Structure," 66. I address Morewedge's arguments for union in Ibn Sīnā's philosophy in chapter 5.

desire these objects, the objects are a good for them. Acquiring these goods results in the faculties' perfection. Awareness of this results in pleasure. What constitutes a good and a perfection can vary from thing to thing and circumstance to circumstance. Corporeal distractions can prevent a given faculty from being aware that a good thing is present and deriving pleasure from acquiring it. Building upon what he has already said of the superiority of intellectual pleasure, Ibn Sīnā here observes that intellectual attainment is greater than sensory attainment because intelligibles, themselves, are greater than sensory objects.

3 Awareness of Pleasure and Pain

Ibn Sīnā next reiterates what he already mentioned in VIII.6–7, while also alluding to what he will address in the first section of *Pointers* IX (**VIII.10**):

الآن إذا كنت في البدن وفي شواغله وعوائقه فلم تشتق إلى كمالك المناسب ولم تتألّم بحصول ضدّه

When you are in [your] body and [are immersed] in its distractions and impediments, you will not long for the perfection that is suitable for you, nor will you feel pain when its contrary occurs.[72]

In the *Notes*, Ibn Sīnā more figuratively characterizes the soul's relation to its body as "being dressed in matter" (*mulābasatan li-l-hayūlā*), which prevents the soul from becoming separate and, likewise, knowing what is separate.[73] This resembles a statement that he makes in *Immolation Destination*: Although the human rational soul is of the same substance as the celestial souls—for they are both separate and intellectual (*ʿaqliyya*) forms—the rational soul does not experience its ultimate pleasure while it is connected to the body, for the bodily faculties predominate over the rational soul to such an extent that the soul may forget its simple essence while it is embodied.[74] In *Elements* and *Philo-*

72 *al-Išārāt*, VIII.10, 347.2–3. I follow Forget's *wa-lam tataʾallam* against Zārīʿī's *aw lam tataʾallam*; Forget, *Le livre des théorèmes*, 194.18; cf. Michot, "Joie et bonheur," 56n47. The allusion refers to *Pointers* IX.1, in which Ibn Sīnā metaphorically refers to the body as an outer garment (*jilbāb*) of the soul; only the knowers are able to dispense of this during their lifetimes.

73 *al-Taʿlīqāt*, III.15, 98.14. The metaphor also appears in Ibn Sīnā's "Commentary on the *Theology of Aristotle*" (*tulābis al-abdān*); "*Commentary on the* Theology of Aristotle," 71.11.

74 Ibn Sīnā adds that this reaches "the point that power and control belong to the senses and the [faculties of] Estimation, ire, and appetite" (*ḥattā anna l-yada wa-l-sulṭāna li-l-ḥissi wa-l-wahmi wa-l-ġaḍabi wa-l-šahwati*); *al-Aḍḥawiyya*, VII, 149.14–15.

sophy, he likewise observes that so long as the soul is associated with the body, it is distracted from attaining true pleasures and pains.[75] Nevertheless, while these statements seem unyielding, Ibn Sīnā allows in the *Pointers*, *Provenance and Destination*, and *Immolation Destination* for the possibility that the rational soul may partially experience the pleasures that are proper to it while it remains embodied.[76]

At this point the purpose of mentioning the effect of corporeal impediments to the acquisition of appropriate perfections is not to discuss how one may transcend these impediments. Rather, Ibn Sīnā begins to address corporeal distractions in relation to the possibility of the rational soul experiencing punishment when it separates from the body after death (**VIII.11**).

اعلم أنّ هذه الشواغل التي هي كما علمتَ من أنّها انفعالات وهيئات تلحق النفس بمجاورة البدن إن تمكّنت بعد المفارقة كنتَ بعدها كما كنت

Know that if these distractions—which are, as you have learned, passions and figurations that attach to the [rational] soul through its contiguousness with the body[77]—are firmly fixed [in the soul] after [it] separates from [the body], you will remain after [separation] just as you were before. Except, they [the passions and figurations] will be like persisting pains from which there was a distraction—[a dis-

75 *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 60.5–6; *Dānišnāma*, Ilāhiyyāt, 108.9–10.

76 Cf. *al-Išārāt*, VIII.14–15, 348–349. In *Provenance and Destination*, Ibn Sīnā observes that, because of the body, we may only partially experience the pleasure of attaining the Truth (relevant passage is translated below). In *Immolation Destination*, Ibn Sīnā notes that the ability to partake in the intellectual pleasures that pertain to the separate intellects depends on the extent to which the animal faculties have retreated under the control of the rational soul. Such a person whose rational soul is completely in control of the animal faculties may experience in this world a small measure of the intellectual pleasure associated with the afterlife; *al-Aḍḥawiyya*, VII, 150.8–14; see also McGinnis, *Avicenna*, 217; Daiber, "The Limitations of Knowledge," 27–28.

77 Ibn Sīnā intimates that the relation of the body to the soul has already been explained, which can be found in *al-Išārāt*, III.6, 236–237. There, he states that the human soul is one substance, but that it has branches (*furūʿ*) that are spread throughout the body. When one of the body's parts senses something—or, likewise, when you imagine something, desire something, or become angry at something—the relation between the soul's substance and its branches sends forth a certain figuration (*hayʾa*) which results in the performance of an action. Likewise, when an intellectual form is present to the soul, this relation results in the transition of an effect from the substance of the soul to its branches and ultimately to the parts of the body, once again resulting in an action. As an example, he mentions how, when contemplating God's sovereignty, one's skin trembles (*yaqšaʿirr*) and one's hair stands up. Ibn Sīnā again alludes to this section in *Pointers* X.3.

traction] which has [since] been discharged. Therefore, [the pains are now] attained insofar as they are negations [of perfections].[78]

قبلها لكنّها تكون كآلام متمكّنة كان عنها شغل فوقع إليها فراغ فأدركت من حيث هي منافية

When the body dies and the soul separates with it, the corporeal faculties naturally die along with it. This includes Memory and Imagination. On account of the soul's long association with the body, certain corporeal figurations can become firmly fixed in the soul. This is especially the case if the soul was overly submissive to the body while the body was alive. This is Ibn Sīnā's answer to the question of the soul's continued individuation after it loses its individuating principle (the body), something Sebti has characterized as "one of the greatest difficulties of Avicennan psychology."[79] As Adamson suggested, it remains "individuated by its history" with the body.[80] Ibn Sīnā characterizes these figurations as "negations," meaning the opposite of perfections. Just as perfections lead to pleasure, negations lead to pain. So long as the soul remains connected to the body, the body may distract the soul in some fashion from these figurations. Once the body is "discharged"—meaning once it dies and the soul separates from it—the distraction is gone, and the soul experiences extreme pain as a result of these figurations.

78 VIII.11, 347.6–9. Where Ibn Sīnā's text reads *lākinna-hā takūnu ka-ālāmin mutamakkinatin kāna ʿan-hā šuġlun fa-waqaʿa ilay-hā farāġun*, Inati's translation reads, "But they will be like persisting pains, *for they were the source of action, and now no action can be attributed to them*;" Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 75; emphasis added. Although Inati based her translation on Dunyā's edition (Cairo, 1960–1968), there are no variants between Dunyā's and Zāriʿī's editions. It appears that Inati is interpreting *šuġlun* as "source of action," despite Ibn Sīnā's clear and consistent usage of it in this context as "distraction" or "preoccupation."

79 Sebti, *Avicenne*, 80n2.

80 Adamson, "Correcting Plotinus," 74. Adamson offered this as a tentative response to the problem of the soul's individuation after death as expressed by Druart, "The Human Soul's Individuation," 273. Jari Kaukua similarly observes that "the soul will be individuated after the corruption of the body by its *having once been* related to that particular body at a particular time." For his discussion of the soul's individuation, see his *Self-Awareness in Islamic Philosophy*, 43–51 (quote at 46). For more on individuation, see also Black, "Avicenna on Individuation"; and, for the post-Avicennan era, Benevich, "Individuation and Identity." This is, admittedly, not a fully satisfactory answer to the problem, as Ibn Sīnā discusses the enduring effects of corporeal figurations only in the context of souls that have not achieved perfection. Additionally, as we will see in the next section, these figurations may ultimately subside. While it is unclear, at that point, whether they could continue to fulfill their individuating function, it is nonetheless clear that Ibn Sīnā maintained the soul's individual identity in the afterlife, and that the soul's history with the body is in some capacity responsible for that.

Yet again, Ibn Sīnā has presented a similar scenario in his other works, which provide clarifying details that are left out of his succinct remarks in the *Pointers*. The enduring figurations, associated with corporeal faculties like appetite and ire, inhibit the rational soul from achieving its proper perfection (attaining intelligibles). This makes it as if the rational soul were still associated with its body even after that association has ended. Since the rational soul has an inborn desire to preoccupy itself with and manage the affairs of the body, its association with the body prevents it from experiencing both the pleasures that result from attaining its proper perfection and the pains that result from failing to do so.[81] Without the encumbrances of the body distracting the rational soul, the soul attains these figurations as being negations, which results in the experience of pain.

Provenance and Destination

When we are in this world and embodied, we feel only some of the pleasure of attaining the Truth, except it is weak, hidden, and obscured because of the body. We can arrive at this happiness [associated with attaining the Truth] only when we have truly separated from the body. We have truly separated from the body only when we have separated and there [remains] in us no corporeal figuration which occurs by means of [our former] compliance [to the body and its faculties] … When the soul separates from the body but those exact figurations [remain] with it, it is as if [the soul] had not separated. These figurations prevent the soul from [experiencing] happiness after [separating from] the body. Additionally, there occurs a great type of pain.[82] This is because these figurations are contrary and foreign to the soul's substance.

ونحن في الدنيا وفي البدن قد نلتذّ بعض اللذّة بإدراك الحقّ إلّا أنّها ضعيفة خفيّة خاملة لعلّة البدن وإنّما يمكننا أن نتوصّل إلى هذه السعادة إذا فارقنا البدن على الحقيقة وإنّما تكون مفارقتنا البدن على الحقيقة إذا فارقنا وليس فينا هيئة بدنيّة ممّا يحصل على سبيل الإذعان … فإذا فارقت النفس البدن ومعها تلك الهيئات بأعيانها كانت كأنّها غير مفارقة فهذه الهيئات تمنع النفس عن السعادة بعد البدن ومع هذه فيحدث نوع من الأذى عظيم وذلك لأن هذه الهيئات مضادّة لجوهر النفس غريبة وكان إقبال النفس على

81 On the rational soul's inborn desire to manage the body, see *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XV, 136.12–137.3; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.7, 355.2–3; *al-Najāt*, 332.13–14. On the soul's essential relation to the body, see Alpina, *Subject, Definition, Activity*, 117–127.

82 Reading *fa-yaḥduṯu naw'un mina l-aḍā 'aẓīmun* over *fa-yaḥduṯu …'aẓīman*.

The soul's proximity to the body was distracting it from sensing what is contrary to it. But now, since the proximity has ceased, it necessarily senses what is contrary to it and so experiences a most intense pain.[83]

البدن يشغل النفس عن الإحساس بمضادّتها والآن إذ زال ذلك الإقبال فيجب أن تحسّ بما يضادّها فتتأذّى به أشدّ الأذى

Immolation Destination

Just as this happiness is very sublime, so the misery that is its opposite is very painful. [This is] because the soul's relation to the body is not like that of form to matter. It is not the body's substance [the rational soul] that stands between it and this happiness, but the effects and figurations that become fixed in it because of the body. When bodily figurations—like appetite, ire, and desire for worldly things that should not be desired—become fixed and deeply-rooted in the [rational] soul, and [the rational soul] separates from the body while remaining fixed in it, they become an obstacle to true perfection and happiness. It is as if [the rational soul] is still in the body.[84]

وكما تلك السعداة عظيمة جدّاً فكذلك الشقواة التي تقابلها أليمة جدّاً ولأنّ النفس في البدن لم تكن كالصورة في المادّة فليس جوهر البدن هو الحائل بينه وبين تلك السعادة بل الآثار والهيئات المتقرّرة فيه عن البدن فإذا ثبتت الهيئات البدنيّة كالشهوة والغضب والرغبة في غير المرغوب فيه من الأمور الدنيويّة في النفس ورسخت وفارقت البدن وهي فيه ثابتة كانت مانعة عن الاستكمال الحقيقيّ والسعادة الحقيقيّة وتكون كأنّها بعد في البدن

Lesser Destination, Salvation, Cure

When the [rational soul] separates [from the body] while there [remains] in it the disposition to be in contact with it, it closely resembles its state when it is [immersed] in the body. Insofar as this [contact between soul and body] is lesser than that [prior state], it does not render it inattentive to the motion of its desire toward its perfection; and insofar as some of it [contact with the body] remains with it [the soul], it hinders it from full contact

فإذا فارقت وفيها ملكة الاتّصال به كانت قريبة الشبه من حالها وهي فيه فبما ينقص من ذلك لا يغفلها عن حركة الشوق الذي له إلى كمالها وبما يبقى منه معها يصدّها عن الاتّصال الصرف لمحلّ سعادتها ويحدث هناك من الحركات المتشوّشة ما يعظم أذاه ثمّ إنّ تلك الهيئة البدنيّة مضادّة لجوهرها مؤذية لها وإنّما كان يلهيها عنه أيضاً

83 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.14, 112.23–113.11.

84 *al-Aḍḥawiyya*, VII, 151.3–10.

with the locus of its happiness. Then there occurs confused motions that magnify its pain. These corporeal figurations are contrary to its [the rational soul's] substance and harm it. Additionally, it was precisely the body and its [the soul's] complete immersion in it that used to divert its [the rational soul's] attention from this. But when it [the rational soul] separates from it [the body], it senses these immense contraries and experiences immense pain.[85]

البدن وتمام انغماسه فيه فإذا فارقته أحسّت بتلك المضادّة العظيمة وتأذّت أذىً عظيماً

Guidance

The [rational] soul that separates while having obtained figurations binding it to the bodily faculties as dispositions—when it separates, it is as if it has not separated, since it did not commingle with its essence, but rather with these figurations. When it becomes simple while still possessing them [figurations], they impede it from achieving the loftiest perfection; but it is not in its worldly body, in which case its circumstances would have distracted it.[86] Upon resurrection, its

والنفس التي تفارق وقد حصلت فيها الهيئات الانقياديّة لقوى البدن ملكاتٍ فإنّها إذا فارقت كانت كأنّها لم تفارق إذ لم تكن مخالطة بذاتها بل كانت مخالطتها بهذه الهيئات فإذا تجرّدت وبها هي عاقتها عن الاستكمال الأجلّ ولم تكن في البدن الدنياويّ فتشغله أحواله إنّما بدنه عند

85 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XV, 137.4–8; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.7, 355.4–10; *al-Najāt*, 332.16–22. Although this passage appears in *Lesser Destination*, *Cure*, and *Salvation*, there are significant distinctions between the *Cure/Salvation* version and the *Lesser Destination* version. These have caused some textual difficulties. It is unclear whether these occurred in the manuscript transmission or in the editing. In the *Cure/Salvation* passages, Ibn Sīnā speaks of the soul's substance (*jawhar al-nafs*) and the body (*al-badan*). As such, subjects of verbs and pronouns are all masculine. In the *Lesser Destination*, he speaks of the soul (*al-nafs*, feminine) and the body. Yet, many masculine verbs and pronouns appear in the Ahwānī edition when one would expect feminine, leaving the passage in a confused state.

86 The accusative pronoun in *fa-tašġaluhu* is masculine, despite its clear reference to the rational soul. The same goes for the masculine pronoun in *badanuhu* in the following sentence. Michot uses a feminine pronoun for *tašġaluhu* and masculine for *badanuhu*, as does Lizzini. Lizzini also follows Michot in adding "aware" to this sentence, yielding "It was not [aware of them] in the worldly body, whose states preoccupied it;" Lizzini, "Metafisica," 420; Michot, "Eschatologie," 142.

body will have a different temperament and composition. It is like an anesthetized person who is burning and the anesthesia has worn off. In such case, he is harmed by his state.[87]

البعث على مزاج وتركيب آخر فكانت نكدر يحترق وقد زال الخدر فهناك يتأذّى بما به

Commentary on the Theology of Aristotle

When the [rational] soul becomes corporeal and figurations binding it to such corporeal things as appetite, ire, and the like become firmly established in it—in fact, these figurations become dispositions in it—then after the [death of the] body, the soul is, as a whole, what it was [when it was] in the body. It is turned away from the higher world.[88]

فإذا صارت النفس بدنيّة وتمكّنت فيها هيئات انقياديّة للأمور البدنيّة من الشهوة والغضب وغير ذلك بل صارت هذه الهيئات ملكات فيها كانت النفس بعد البدن على الجملة التي كانت في البدن فكتون مصدودة عن العالم العلويّ

This pain and the associated negation are the counterpart to the pleasures and associated perfections that Ibn Sīnā has described. However, the pain in the afterlife is that of spiritual fire (*al-nār al-rūḥāniyya*). This is naturally so because the soul has now separated from the body; as such, any pain or pleasure that is experienced cannot be corporeal. As has already been explained, spiritual (i.e., incorporeal, intellectual) pleasures and pains exceed those of corporeal and sensory pleasures and pains, so the spiritual fire will be greater than bodily fire. Looking to his other works, we see that Ibn Sīnā expresses the same idea in *Provenance and Destination*, where he says, "The pleasures of the afterlife are more exalted than any sensation of something compatible … likewise the pains [of the afterlife] are more severe than any sensation of something incompatible."[89]

4 Pleasure and Pain in the Afterlife

The next question that Ibn Sīnā addresses is whether the pains that result from the lingering corporeal figurations on the post-separation soul will be permanent, and how this compares to the pains resulting from deficiencies that are inherent to the soul (**VIII.12**). Those base qualities that are due to vicissitudes

87 *al-Hidāya*, III.6, 303.3–304.2.

88 "*Commentary on the* Theology of Aristotle," 42.1–3.

89 *ka-mā anna l-laḏḏata l-āḫariyyata ajallu min kulli iḥsāsi mulā'imin … ka-ḏālika ḏālika l-alamu ašaddu min kulli iḥsāsin bi-munāfin*; *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*, III.14, 113.19–20.

extraneous to the soul do not endure permanently after the separation of the soul from the body, and so are not the source of eternal punishment in the afterlife. On the other hand, the soul's vices (*raḏīlat al-nafs*) that are due to a deficiency in its preparation (*istiʿdād*) for the perfection that is hoped for after separation are irredeemable.

ثمّ اعلم أنّ ما كان من رذيلة النفس من جنس نقصان الاستعداد للكمال الذي يُرجَى بعد المفارقة فهو **غير مجبور** وما كان بسبب غواشٍ غريبة فيزول ولا يدوم بها التعذّب

Know that the soul's vice that is a kind of deficiency in [its] preparation for the perfection that is hoped for after the separation [of the soul from the body at death] is **irredeemable**. And [know that] whatever [vices are] due to external impediments cease [after separation], and punishment does not endure because of them.[90]

There is disagreement in how modern scholars have understood this reminder.[91] The text in bold is the locus of disagreement. In my translation, I follow Michot, who translates *ġayr majbūr* as "irreparable."[92] Goichon and Inati both translate this as "not imposed."[93] The source of the disagreement is the meaning of *majbūr*, the passive participle of *jabara*, which can mean 1) to restore, repair, or recover someone or something from a state of deficiency, and 2) to compel, constrain.[94] The root is perhaps best known in the sense of God's compulsion or predestination of humanity (*jabr*), which may be informing

90 *al-Išārāt*, VIII.12, 347.13–348.1; emphasis added.

91 The same can be said, in fact, for pre-modern commentators. Among the most prominent of them, Rāzī understands the first part of the passage to refer to imperfections of the theoretical faculty, with the second part referring to imperfections of the practical faculty. Imperfections of the first kind are "those which cannot subside and cannot be redeemed at all" (*lā yumkinu zawāluhu wa-la yaṣīru majbūrani l-battata*); Rāzī, *Šarḥ*, 2:580.7. Rāzī implies that these imperfections will result in enduring punishment. Imperfections of the practical faculty, on the other hand, will result in temporary torment in the afterlife. Ṭūsī states that any vice of the soul "that is caused by an innate imperfection, in relation to the two faculties [theoretical and practical] together, is not imposed after death and there will not be torment because of them. This is what the Šayḫ mentioned" (*fa-llaḏī yakūnu bi-sababi nuqṣāni l-ġarīzati bi-ḥasabi l-quwwatayni maʿan fa-huwa ġayru majbūrin baʿda l-mawti wa-lā yakūnu bi-sababihā taʿaḏḏubun wa-huwa llaḏī ḏakarahu l-šayḫ*); Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ*, 2:988.1–2. Rāzī's and Ṭūsī's interpretations of *ġayr majbūr* mirror the differing stances of modern scholars.

92 Michot, "Joie et bonheur," 57.9.

93 Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 75.30–31; Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 474.21–22.

94 Lane and Lane-Poole, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 1968, 2:373.

Goichon's and Inati's reading. In this instance, Ibn Sīnā sets up a disparity between imperfections of the theoretical and practical faculties of the soul; in other words, imperfections associated with the intellect's pursuit of intelligibles (theoretical), and imperfections associated with its management of the body (practical). Goichon's and Inati's reading presents precisely the opposite scenario to what Ibn Sīnā is elaborating. Michot's is the correct reading: imperfections of the theoretical faculty are irredeemable, while those of the practical faculty will eventually disappear after the soul's separation from the body, taking their associated torment along with them.[95]

Once again, Ibn Sīnā's other texts help to clarify and confirm what he communicates in the *Pointers*. Using similar, yet more straightforward, language in *Provenance and Destination*, *Immolation Destination*, and *Lesser Destination* (repeated in *Cure* and *Salvation*), he explains that lingering corporeal deficiencies are foreign to (*ġarība*) and not a part of the soul's substance (*ġayr jawhariyya la-hā*) or essence (*laysa li-amrin ḏātiyyin*). They will eventually (*fī āḫir al-amr*, *qalīlan qalīlan*) subside (*tanmaḥī*) and the soul will reach true happiness.[96] He even asserts that religious law (*al-šarā'iʿ*) corroborates his position, citing the saying, "The sinning believer will not spend eternity in punishment."[97] As we have already seen in the previous chapter, Ibn Sīnā maintains a generally optimistic perspective about humanity's soteriological status in the afterlife.

Ibn Sīnā continues to address conditions that will lead to punishment in the afterlife, focusing now on imperfections of the theoretical faculty (**VIII.13**).

واعلم أنّ رذيلة النقصان إنّما تتأذّى بها نفس شيّقة إلى الكمال وذلك الشوق تابع لتنبّه يفيده الاكتساب والبله بجنبة من هذا العذاب وإنّما هو

And know that only the soul that desires perfection is harmed by the vice of deficiency, and that that desire follows after an alertness which is the product of an acquisition. The unmindful are in a state far-removed from this punishment;[98] it is only for the deniers,

95 Michot addresses this in *Destinée*, 177 ff. For this reason, Janssens remarks that Ibn Sīnā values the theoretical life over the practical life; "The Problem of Human Freedom," 117.

96 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.14, 113.12–14; *al-Aḍḥawiyya*, VII, 152.11–12; *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XV, 137.7–12; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.7, 355.10–13; *al-Najāt*, 332.22–26. Ibn Sīnā makes a similar statement, also employing the verb *yanmaḥī*, in "*Commentary on the* Theology of Aristotle," 42.8.

97 *inna l-muʾmina l-fāsiqa lā yuḫalladu fī l-ʿaḍāb*; *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.14, 113.14–15.

98 This statement alludes to the following non-canonical *ḥadīṯ* narrated by Anas b. Mālik: *akṯaru ahli l-jannati l-bulhu*, which can be read either as, "The majority of the people of Paradise are *bulh*," or "The majority of those worthy of Paradise are *bulh*." Qurṭubī

للجاحدين والمهملين والمعرضين عمّا ألمع به إليهم من الحقّ فالبلاهة أدنى إلى الخلاص من فطانة بتراء

the neglectful, and those who turn away from whatever of the Truth that shines toward them. Being unmindful is closer to salvation than sharp perspicacity.[99]

The only soul that will be harmed by the vice of deficiency is the one that is aware of its deficiency and is longing for perfection (i.e., a non-ignorant soul). Such a longing follows from an alertness which is the product of an intellectual acquisition. Failure to acquire the longed-for perfection leads to pain.[100] As such, unmindful folk (*al-bulh*) are unlikely to be punished under this condition, as they do not possess awareness of the perfections that are appropriate for them and that they are lacking. Without such an awareness, one cannot long for perfection; nor can one be aware of one's deficiency with regard to a given perfection. As such, unmindful people are closer to salvation—albeit a lesser salvation—than those with sharp perspicacity.[101]

Ibn Sīnā expands upon this idea in the *Lesser Destination*, *Cure*, and *Salvation*, where he states,

وتلك الشقاوة ليست تكون لكلّ واحد من الناقصين بل للذين اكتسبوا للقوّة العقليّة الشوق إلى كمالها وذلك عندما يبرهن لهم أنّ من شأن

This misery is not for every deficient [soul]; rather, it is for those whose intellectual faculty has obtained a desire for its perfection. This [occurs] when it is demonstrated to them that it is the rational soul's nature to attain the

(d. 671/1272), who deems this *ḥadīṯ* sound, adduces it in his exegesis of Q 26:83–89, which has Muḥammad asking God to make him among the inheritors of Paradise. Citing "al-Azharī" (Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. al-Azhar [d. 370/980]?), he glosses *bulh* (sg. *ablah*) as, "one whose nature it is to do good while being heedless of evil, not knowing it" (*al-ablahu hunā huwa llaḏī ṭubiʿa ʿalā l-ḫayri wa-huwa ġāfilun ʿani l-šarri lā yaʿrifuhu*). In his commentary, Ṭūsī glosses *bulh* as "possessing simple souls" (*aṣḥābu l-nufūsi l-sāḏijati*), but says that in general use it means "one overcome by peace of mind and who is worry free. One says, 'A carefree life,' meaning with few worries'" (*huwa llaḏī ġalaba ʿalay-hi salāmatu l-ṣadri wa-qillatu l-ihtimāmi yuqālu ʿayšun ablahu ay qalīlu l-ġumūmi*); Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ*, 2:990.10–11. Though Ṭūsī makes no explicit reference, Jawharī, who cites these same examples in his *Ṣiḥāḥ*, is his typical source; s.v. b-l-h, al-Jawharī, *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, 114.

99 *al-Iškārāt*, VIII.13, 348.3–6.

100 *al-Aḍḥawiyya*, VII, 152.16–153.2; *al-Hidāya*, 302.12–303.2; French trans. in Michot, "Eschatologie," 142; Italian trans. in Lizzini, "Metafisica," 419–420.

101 In the *Immolation Destination*, Ibn Sīnā includes not only unmindful folk, but also youths (*al-ṣibyān*), in this group; *al-Aḍḥawiyya*, VII, 153.6–7. It does not even occur to such individuals that there are perfections proper to them that they should acquire.

النفس إدراك ماهيّة الكلّ بكسب المجهول من المعلوم والاستكمال بالفعل فإنّ ذلك ليس فيها بالطبع الأوّل ولا أيضاً في سائر القوى بل شعور أكثر القوى ⟨بكمالاتها⟩ إنّما يحدث بعد أسباب وأمّا النفوس والقوى الساذجة الصرفة فكأنّها هيولى موضوعة لم تكتسب البتّة هذا الشوق لأنّ هذا الشوق إنّما يحدث حدوثاً وينطبع في جوهر النفس إذا تبرهن للقوى النفسانيّة أنّ ههنا أموراً تكتسب العلم بها بالحدود الوسطى

quiddity of the whole[102] by obtaining [knowledge of] the unknown from the known and by becoming perfect in actuality. [This is so] because this [desire] does not belong to it naturally—nor does it for the rest of the faculties. Indeed, most of the faculties' awareness ⟨of their perfections⟩[103] occurs only after certain causes. As for souls and faculties that are absolutely simple, it is as if they are primary matter which has not obtained this desire at all. [This is] because this desire occurs only [after another] occurrence. It is imprinted in the substance of the soul when it is demonstrated to the soul's faculties that here there are things for which knowledge of them is acquired by means of the middle terms [of syllogisms].[104]

Whereas the unmindful folk are too dim-witted to be aware of their imperfections that lead to punishment after separation, Ibn Sīnā reminds us (**VIII.14**),

والعارفون المتنزّهون إذا وُضع عنهم درن مقارنة البدن وانفكّوا عن الشواغل خلصوا إلى عالم القدس والسعادة وانتقشوا بالكمال الأعلى وحصلت لهم اللذّة العليا

When the unblemished knowers are unburdened of the filth of being linked to the body and are separated from [corporeal] distractions, they arrive at the realm of sanctity and happiness. They are engraved with the highest perfection, and there occurs to them the highest pleasure.[105]

102 The *Cure* and *Lesser Destination* read "whole" (*al-kull*) vs. "perfection" (*al-kamāl*) in the *Salvation*.

103 The *Cure* and *Salvation* both include "of their perfections" (*bi-kamālātihā*), which seems necessary to understand the passage.

104 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XV, 133.10–134.5; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.7, 352.15–353.2; *al-Najāt*, 330.17–24; cf. trans. in Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 17.

105 *al-Išārāt*, VIII.14, 348.8–10. Ibn Sīnā uses similar language in a classification of souls that have separated from the body that he presents in *Immolation Destination*. The first—and highest—category comprises "perfected, unblemished souls. They have absolute happiness" (*nufūsun kāmilatun munazzahatun wa-la-hā l-saʿādatu l-muṭlaqatu*); *al-Aḍḥawiyya*, VII, 152.5. What I have translated as "unblemished knowers" (*al-ʿārifūn al-mutanazzihūn*) Janssens translates as having to do with moral perfection: "the Knowers who are above

The "filth" of the soul's association with the body generally serves to distract the soul from truly knowing the intelligibles and deriving pleasure from that. In the *Cure*, for example, Ibn Sīnā mentions that the intellect's inability to conceptualize certain intelligibles does not have to do with the nature of the human intellect or the intelligibles, but rather with the fact that the body distracts the intellect so long as the rational soul is connected to the body.[106] In the *Notes*, Ibn Sīnā asserts that the corporeal faculties' dominance, especially that of the Imagination, inhibits the soul from devoting itself solely to attaining intelligibles and enjoying the resulting pleasures.[107]

This is not to say, however, that certain souls cannot at least partially partake in this pleasure while still attached to their bodies, as he states (**VIII.15**),

This pleasure is not lost in all respects while the soul is in the body. Rather, those who immerse themselves in pondering the dominion,[108] who turn away from distractions, par-

وليس هذا الالتذاذ مفقوداً من كلّ وجه والنفس في البدن بل المنغمسون في تأمّل الجبروت المعرضون عن الشواغل يصيبون وَهُم

(moral) imperfection;" Janssens, "Philosophical Mysticism," 44. This is a plausible reading, as being above moral imperfection would mean that the practical intellect has successfully dominated the body's faculties and desires, which amounts to cultivating virtue, and supports the theoretical intellect in its pursuit of the intelligibles; on this, see Lizzini, "Vie active," 219ff. By *mutanazzih* Ibn Sīnā is referring to those individuals whose intellects are so developed that they function as if they had rid themselves of their connections to their bodies and all of the distractions that come with them. This is precisely what Ibn Sīnā means in this section when he speaks of the "filth of being linked to a body" and when he refers, in IX.1, to the knowers being "as though, while [wrapped] in the *jilbāb*s of their bodies, they have removed and rid themselves of them, [moving] toward the Realm of Sanctity." Theoretical perfection is precisely how *al-ʿārifūn al-mutanazzihūn* was understood in the commentaries by Rāzī, Naḫjuwānī, Ṭūsī, Urmawī, and Samarqandī; Rapoport, "Sufi Vocabulary, but Avicennan Philosophy," 152n25. A Plotinian ring to Ibn Sīnā's use of "filth" can be found in the *Theology of Aristotle*: "The pure, clean soul that has not been dirtied and has not been sullied by the stains of the body;" trans. Adamson, "Correcting Plotinus," 68–69.

106 *Avicenna's De Anima*, V.5, 237.16–18; passage translated in McGinnis and Reisman, *Classical Arabic Philosophy*, 201.

107 "The corporeal faculties prevent the [rational] soul from being devoted to itself and the properties of its attainments. It attains things as objects of the Imagination, not as objects of the intellect, due to its attraction to it [the Imagination] and its [the Imagination's] taking hold of it" (*al-quwwatu l-badaniyyatu tamnaʿu l-nafsa ʿani l-tafarrud bi-ḏātihā waḫawāṣṣi idrākātihā fa-hiya tudriku l-ašyāʾa mutaḫayyilatan lā maʿqūlatan li-njiḏābihā ilayhā wa-stīlāʾihā ʿalay-hā*); *al-Taʿlīqāt*, III.16, 99.6–8.

108 The use of *jabarūt* here is in the sense of *ʿālam al-jabarūt*, "the realm of [divine] dominion." Ibn Sīnā's use of the terms *ʿālam al-jabarūt*, *ʿālam al-quds*—and, elsewhere, *ʿālam al-malakūt*—refers to the supernal realm of the celestial spheres and their associated

take—even while in their bodies—in an abundant share of this pleasure, which may take control of them, thereby distracting them from everything [else].[109]

في الأبدان من هذه اللذّة حظّاً وافراً قد يتمكّن منهم فيشغلهم عن كلّ شيء

Ibn Sīnā elaborates on this topic in more detail in *Immolation Destination*:

For whomever the strength of his rational soul becomes dominant over the strength of his animal soul in this world will begin to sense and become aware of some of this pleasure to varying [degrees]. Those who reach this [state] naturally and are strengthened by the dominance of their rational faculty over their animal [faculties], and of the internal over the external [faculties], to the point that the animal and external do not overcome it, then perhaps they will have in this world a part of this pleasure. But as for fully [experiencing it], there is no way for this [to happen] except in the afterlife.[110]

فَمَن قوى سلطان نفسه الناطقة في هذا العالم على سلطان القوّة الحيوانيّة جعل يحسّ ويشعر بشيء من تلك اللذّة على التفاوت والذين أوتوا في الجبلّة ذلك وأيّدوا باستعلاء قوّتهم النطقيّة على الحيوانيّة والباطنة على الظاهرة حتّى لا تغلبها الحيوانيّة والظاهرة فعسى أن يكون لهم من تلك اللذّة في هذه الدنيا جزء له قدر وأمّا الإطلاق فلا سبيلَ إليها إلّا في الآخرة

He similarly affirms in the De Anima of the *Cure*, the Metaphysics of the *Cure* and *Salvation*, his commentary on book *Lambda* of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and the *Gift* that the human rational soul can, with some difficulty, experience fleeting contact with the active intellect, even if the body remains an impediment to fully receiving the active intellect's effluence all at once.[111]

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intellects; Gutas, "Intellect," 2014, 12; Gutas, "Imagination," 2014, 347; see also, Michot, "Joie et bonheur," 58n55; Michot, *Destinée*, 166n97; Boer and Gardet, "'Ālam."

109 *al-Išārāt*, VIII.15, 348.12–349.2. Cf. IX.1, 355. Lizzini's assertion that, for Ibn Sīnā, "true intellectual pleasure is not to be had in this life" should perhaps be modified to "is not to be had fully;" Lizzini, "Avicenna: The Pleasure of Knowledge," 265.

110 *al-Aḍḥawiyya*, VII, 150.8–14.

111 "So long as the common human soul remains in the body, it is prevented from receiving the active intellect['s effluence] all at once" (*wa-mā dāmati l-nafsu l-bašariyyatu l-ʿāmmiyyatu fī l-badani fa-inna-hu mumtaniʿun ʿalay-hā an taqbula l-ʿaqla l-faʿʿāla dufʿatan*); *Avicenna's De Anima*, V.6, 247.13–15. "Likewise, one should know about our state so long as we remain in our bodies. When our intellectual faculty's perfection occurs to it in actuality, it does not experience anything of the pleasure that is due to something in and of itself, and that is because the body is an impediment" (*fa-ka-ḏālika yajibu an yaʿlima min ḥālinā mā dumnā fī l-badani fa-iḏā ḥaṣala li-quwwatinā l-ʿaqliyyati kamāluhā bi-l-fiʿli lā tajidu mina l-laḏḏati*

Returning to the *Pointers*, Ibn Sīnā adds that those souls that are sound and in their natural state, untouched by worldly blemishes, may be overcome by a certain desire and experience a great and perplexing joy when they hear a spiritual call that points to the states of the separate souls (i.e., the celestial souls; **VIII.16**). Whoever experiences this will be motivated to achieve satisfaction by fully developing their philosophical reflection (*tatimmat al-istibṣār*).[112] He contrasts this with those whose actions are motived by the pursuit of praise and rivalry. They are satisfied merely by whatever brings them to their goal and will miss out on the true pleasure that belongs to the knowers. While some scholars see Ibn Sīnā's knower (*ʿārif*) as a paradigmatic mystic or Sufi, so far, Ibn Sīnā has consistently mentioned the knowers in an intellectual, as opposed to Sufi or mystical, context. He is not stating that the knowers experience joy, felicity, or pleasure on account of union with God; rather, he is explicitly and repeatedly connecting their joy, felicity, and pleasure to their level of intellectual perfection and the mastery of their rational soul over all other faculties of the body and the animal soul, such that a knower can turn away from all distractions and experience the pleasure of intellectual perfection (something he returns to in *Pointers* IX).

While only the knowers' souls may experience something of this pleasure while still connected to their bodies, their souls are not the only ones that will experience pleasure after separation from their bodies; in other words, after death. Ibn Sīnā declares that when the souls of unmindful folk are free of mater-

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mā yajibu li-l-šay'i fī nafsihi wa-ḏālika li-ʿā'iqi l-badani); *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.7, 298.6–8; *al-Najāt*, 282.18–20. "Despite the weakness of our [ability to] conceptualize strong intelligibles and our immersion in [our] corporeal nature, we can arrive in a furtive manner to the point that contact with the First Truth becomes present to us. It is like a strange happiness in a very short period of time" (*innā naḥnu maʿa ḍuʿfi taṣawwurinā li-l-maʿqūlāti l-qawiyyati wa-nġimāsinā fī l-ṭabīʿati l-badaniyyati qad natawaṣṣalu ʿalā sabīli l-iḫtilāsi fa-yaẓharu la-nā ttiṣālun bi-l-ḥaqqi l-awwali fa-yakūnu ka-saʿādatin ʿajībatin fī zamānin qalīlin jiddan*); Geoffroy et al., *Commentaire*, 59.151–153; cited and trans. in Janssens, "Philosophical Mysticism," 41. "It is difficult for [the rational soul], then, to make contact with the divine, lofty effluence that brings perfection and takes it away. [This difficulty is] because of the rational soul's being surrounded by murkiness that exists in it because of its being confined in the body and its existence in a state of being linked [to a body]" (*wa-yaṣʿubu ʿalay-hā ḥīna'iḏini l-ittiṣālu bi-l-fayḍi l-ʿulwiyyi l-ilāhiyyi llaḏī yuqārinu l-kamāla wa-yazīlu bi-hi min ḥadqati nafsihi l-nuṭqiyyati l-kumdata l-mawjūdata fī-hā mina nḥiṣārihā fī l-badani wa-wujūdihā fī maḥalli l-qarniyyati*); "Risālat al-Tuḥfa," 4.10–12.

112 *al-Išārāt*, VIII.16, 349.9. The term *al-istibṣār* reappears in in the form of the active participle in *Pointers* IX.7, where Ibn Sīnā refers to "he tries to reflect [philosophically] through demonstrative certainty," and in X.24, where he refers to the happiness that is granted to "lovers of [philosophical] reflection;" IX.7, 359.7, X.24, 386.7. I follow the translation of *istibṣār* in Gutas, "Imagination," 2014, 353.

ial attachments ("blemishes," in his parlance), they will experience a measure of post-separation happiness that is appropriate to their level of perfection (**VIII.17**). Given their lower state of perfection, however, it is possible that these souls are not prepared for the incorporeal, intellectual reality of the afterlife.[113] In such cases, they will require a body to be their subject (*mawḍūʿ*) so that they may continue to rely on a faculty of Imagination (this is the instrument that Ibn Sīnā refers to in the next passage below).[114] This subject may be played by a celestial body.[115] This is something that Ibn Sīnā also allowed for—albeit somewhat tentatively—in earlier works, where he elaborated in much greater detail on how this is meant to work.

Provenance and Destination

One scholar,[116] who does not conjecture facilely, gave a plausible account [of what happens to these unmindful souls], namely that when they separate from [their] bodies while still being corporealist and having no relation to what is more exalted than bodies (such that the theoretical [faculty's] attachment and relation to it would distract them from corporeal things), and [they see] their souls as mere ornaments of their bodies, knowing nothing other than bodies and corporeal things, it is possible that some type of their desire for bod-

قال بعض أهل العلم ممن لا يجازف في ما يقول قولاً ممكناً وهو أنّ هؤلاء إذا فارقوا البدن وهم بدنيّون وليس لهم تعلّق بما هو أعلى من الأبدان فيشغلهم التزام النظر إليها والتعلّق بها عن الأشياء البدنيّة وإنّما لأنفسهم أنّها زينة أبدانهم فقط ولا تعرف غير الأبدان والبدنيّات أمكن أن يعلّقهم نوع شوقهم إلى البدن ببعض الأبدان التي من شأنها أن تتعلّق بها الأنفس لأنّها طالبة

113 For more on the afterlife according to Ibn Sīnā, see Mattila, *Eudaimonist Ethics*, 118–128; McGinnis, *Avicenna*, 217–221; Stroumsa, "True Felicity."

114 In *Guidance*, Ibn Sīnā observes that the souls of the common folk (*al-ʿāmma*) will have eternal pleasure or pain as they had imagined it would be, but neither explains how this would work nor presents a refutation of transmigration; *al-Hidāya*, III.6, 304.3–6; French trans. in Michot, "Eschatologie," 142; Italian trans. in Lizzini, "Metafisica," 420.

115 The Imagination is a faculty of the animal soul and so dies along with the death of the body. The association with a celestial body provides continued access to a faculty of Imagination, essentially tricking an undeveloped rational soul into thinking that it remains in the afterlife embodied as it was in its earthly life. In the *Provenance and Destination*, Ibn Sīnā entertains but ultimately rejects that these bodies may also be generated from air, smoke, or vapor; *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.15, 115.5. On the impossibility of the survival of the internal senses in the afterlife, and the possible use of a celestial body, see Michot, *Destinée*, 169–189, esp. 187–189. For discussion of Ibn Sīnā's theory of the Imagination in the afterlife, and its reception, see van Lit, *World of Image*, 20–47.

116 Ṭūsī, who quotes part of this passage in his commentary, suggests that Ibn Sīnā is referring to al-Fārābī; Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ*, 2:999.5–6.

ies will connect them with one of the bodies whose nature it is for souls to have a relation with them. [This is] because they are naturally searching [for this], while these [souls] have been prefigured [for this] by corporeal figurations. [These bodies will] not [be] the human or animal bodies that we have mentioned, for if they [the souls] were to attach to them, they would be nothing but a [rational] soul to them. It is possible that that be a celestial body, but not that these souls become souls for that body and [become] its governor. This is not possible. Rather, they will use that body to make Imagination possible. Then they will Imagine the forms that they believed in and that were in their Estimation.[117]

بالطبع وهذه مهيّأة بهيئة الأجسام دون الأبدان الإنسانيّة والحيوانيّة التي ذكرنا ولو تعلّق بها لم تكن إلّا نفساً لها فيجوز أن يكون ذلك جرماً سماويّاً لا أن تصير هذه الأنفس أنفساً لذلك الجرم ومدبّرة له فإنّ هذا لا يمكن بل يستعمل ذلك الجرم لإمكان التخيّل ثمّ تتخيّل الصورة التي كانت معتقدة عنده وفي وهمه

Lesser Destination, Cure, Salvation

It also appears that what a certain scholar said is true: Namely, that if these [unmindful] souls are pure and separate from their bodies while certain convictions regarding torment [in the afterlife] are deeply-rooted in them ([convictions] which, for the likes of them, are like what is preached to the commoners [concerning the afterlife] and become forms in their souls), then when they separate from [their] bodies while not possessing any notion that will draw them in the direction of what is above them (neither the perfection [that would] result in their experiencing this happiness, nor the desire for perfection [that would] result in their experiencing this misery; rather, their soul's figurations are directed toward what's lower and drawn toward bodies) and [while] there is nothing to prevent celestial matter from being subjects for

ويشبه أيضاً أن يكون ما قاله بعض العلماء حقّاً وهو أنّ هذه النفوس إن كانت زكيةً وفارقت البدن وقد رسخ فيها نحوٌ من الاعتقادات في العاقبة التي تكون لأمثالهم على مثل ما يمكن أن يخاطب به العامّة ويصوّر في أنفسهم ذلك فإنّهم إذا فارقوا البدن—ولم يكن لهم معنىً جاذب إلى الجهة التي هي فوقهم لا كمالٌ فيسعدوا تلك السعادة ولا شوقُ كمال فيشقوا تلك الشقاوة بل هيئاتها النفسانيّة متوجّهة نحو الأسفل منجذبة إلى الأجسام ولا منعٌ من الموادّ السماويّة عن أن تكون موضوعة لفعل نفس فيها لأنّها تتخيّل جميع ما كانت اعتقدته من الأحوال الأخرويّة وتكون

117 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, 111.15, 114.16–115.2; cf. the trans. in Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 21–22. Inati renders *wahm* in its it generic sense as "minds."

the [rational] soul to act upon so that they may Imagine all of the conditions of the afterlife that they had believed in (the instrument by which they are able to Imagine being a part of the celestial bodies), then they will directly Experience all of what was said to them in their earthly [life] concerning the conditions of the grave, resurrection, and the goods of the afterlife. Meanwhile, the bad souls will also directly Experience and suffer the punishment that was depicted for them in [their] earthly [life].[118]

الآلة التي يمكنها بها التخيّل شيئاً من الأجرام السماويّة—فتشاهد جميع ما قيل لها في الدنيا من أحوال القبر والبعث والخيرات الأخرويّة وتكون الأنفس الرديئة أيضاً تشاهد العقاب المصوّر لهم في الدنيا وتقاسيه

These passages clarify why and how it is that the souls of unmindful persons maintain an attachment to a body in the afterlife. These souls will enter into a relation with a celestial body, but not as that body's governor, as celestial bodies already have souls.[119] This relation, a result of the unmindful soul's desire for a body and unfamiliarity with all things immaterial, will allow for those souls to Imagine the afterlife as it had been preached to them, replete with corporeal pleasures and torments. What is new to Ibn Sīnā's presentation of this theory

118 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XV, 138.7–139.3; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.7, 356.1–10; *al-Najāt*, 333.5–16. Mousavian and Mostafavi have argued, *pace* Gutas, Hasse, and Michot, that the animal soul as it exists in humans does not die with the death of the body, and therefore the powers associated with the animal soul likewise do not die with the death of the body. This means that humans who experience a corporeal afterlife do so by means of their own faculty of Imagination. While they convincingly argue that, for Ibn Sīnā, the animal soul as it exists in humans is a power of the human rational soul, rather than a distinct substance, they do not sufficiently account for Ibn Sīnā's explanation of how intellectually immature souls are able to experience an afterlife full of corporeal pleasures or pains. To support their assertion that the faculty of Imagination "is not necessarily mortal," they argue that if it were mortal, "it would be impossible for the human soul to imagine anything in the hereafter. Avicenna, however, does not consider this to be *impossible*" (emphasis original). It is not impossible, they observe, because Ibn Sīnā mentions, in the above passage from the Metaphysics of the *Cure*, "'the instrument by means of which' these human souls are 'enabled to imagine would be something that belongs to the celestial bodies'" (their translation); Mousavian and Mostafavi, "Avicenna," 73–75 (quotes on 74–75). Sebti similarly states that the intellectually immature have recourse to their own Imagination; Sebti, *Avicenne*, 109. The very passage that Mousavian and Mostafavi evince seems to support the opposite claim. It is evident here that the instrument is the celestial body's faculty of Imagination, not the human's, which suggests that the human Imagination is mortal.

119 On celestial bodies and souls, and their similarities and dissimilarities to human souls, see Alpina, "Is the Heaven an Animal?"

in the *Pointers* is that 1) he no longer introduces it with a caveat that it belongs to some other scholar, and 2) this may not be a permanent attachment.[120] In fact, the additional time spent with a relation to a body may allow for further perfection of these souls, leading them to a state of preparedness for happiness-inducing contact with the active intellect (that being the state of the knowers). Ibn Sīnā emphatically denies that the body in question can be another human body in order to avoid accusations that he is advocating transmigration of souls. He states that the transmigration of the soul in bodies of the same genus is impossible. If it were possible, then every temperament would necessitate that a soul emanate to it and join it. But this would entail two souls simultaneously inhabiting one animal, which is impossible.[121]

As with many other topics that appear in this chapter, Ibn Sīnā presents his opposition to the transmigration of souls more extensively in other texts. In the *Provenance and Destination*, he explains 1) that the rational soul comes into being concomitantly with the body, 2) that the rational soul is one species, the individual instantiations of which are differentiated by the bodies to which they are connected, and 3) that the transmigration of souls is impossible. He informs his reader that the substance of the rational soul comes to be along with the coming-to-be of the human body. This is because human souls are multiple in number, but they are not a material substance (*wa-hiya jawāhiru ġayru hayūlāniyyatin*). Their multiplicity, he says, must either be caused by their essence or by the matter to which they are connected. The multiplicity of human souls cannot be due to specific differences in their essences, as they are one species (*nawʿ*). Rather, the multiplicity of souls is due to the bodies to which they are connected, and the matter out of which those bodies are made. He then claims that the concomitant origination of the soul and the body is not the result of happenstance or chance, but rather is the natural way of things. Having established that rational souls are many in number but one in species, and that they come to be concomitantly with their bodies, whose matter causes their differentiation, Ibn Sīnā then states that it is impossible for a soul that has separated from its body to return and enter another body of the same spe-

120 Ibn Sīnā similarly affirms, without caveat, the ability of the separated, imperfect soul to use a celestial body in the afterlife in "*Commentary on the* Theology of Aristotle," 72.1–5. That Ibn Sīnā presents this theory as his own, rather than distancing himself from it as he did in earlier texts, challenges Mousavian and Mostafavi's assertion that "Avicenna may not endorse this position;" Mousavian and Mostafavi, "Avicenna," 75. Van Lit also concluded that we can see this theory as Ibn Sīnā's own, or at least partially so; van Lit, *World of Image*, 23–24.

121 *al-Išārāt*, VIII.17, 350–352. On the impossibility of transmigration (metempsychosis), see Jaffer, "Bodies, Souls, and Resurrection"; and Adamson, "Correcting Plotinus," 70–74.

cies, because that same body originates simultaneously with its own soul; if this were not impossible, then this body—in fact, all bodies—would have two souls. But, the human body possesses only one soul and can be aware of only one soul.[122] Ibn Sīnā provides a very similar refutation—both in word and in content—in *Immolation Destination*, *Lesser Destination*, and the De Anima of the *Cure* and *Salvation*.[123]

5 Ranking Beings in Terms of Joy

Having defined the nature of pleasure and pain; established the superiority of intellectual pleasures over sensory pleasures; clarified the states in which souls will experience pleasure when connected to and separated from the body; and stated that the souls of non-knowers may imagine themselves still embodied after separating from their bodies—which necessitated a brief allusion to the impossibility of the transmigration of souls—Ibn Sīnā turns to what can be called the ranks of joy (**VIII.18**).

The ranks of joy reflect Ibn Sīnā's cosmology. He begins by stating that the absolute greatest joy is the First experiencing joy in its own essence.[124] Since the First's essence is free from possibility, privation, and distraction—which are the sources of deficiency and therefore misery[125]—It has the strongest ability for attaining that which has the utmost perfection, which happens to be Its own being; this reiterates a message that appears frequently in his corpus:

Provenance and Destination

There belongs to it [the rational soul] a pleasure and happiness that cannot be described or compared to sensory pleasure … This pleasure is similar to the pleasure that the First Principle has in Its essence and in attaining Its essence.[126]

يكون لها من اللذة والسعادة ما لا يمكن أن يوصف أو يقاس به اللذة الحسّيّة … وهذه اللذّة شبيهة باللذّة التي للمبدأ الأوّل بذاته وبإدراك ذاته

122 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.12–13, 107–109.

123 *al-Aḍḥawiyya*, III, 114–126; *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XV, 106–107; *Avicenna's De Anima*, V.3–4, 221–234; *al-Najāt*, 222–227.

124 *ajallu mubtahijin bi-šayʾin huwa l-awwalu bi-ḏātihi*; *al-Išārāt*, VIII.18, 350.11.

125 Ibn Sīnā also identifies privation (*ʿadam*) and potentiality (*quwwa*) to the list of sources of evil in *Epistle on Love* (*ʿadam*) and *Guidance* (*quwwa*); ed. Mehren, *Traités Mystiques*, 1894, 3:2.3–4; trans. in Goodman, *Avicenna*, 72–73; *al-Hidāya*, III.2, 263.3.

126 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.14, 111.17–112.9.

Cure, Salvation

The First is the best attainer by means of the best attaining of the best object of attainment. It is, therefore, the most pleasing and the most pleased.[127]

فالأوّل أفضل مدرك بأفضل إدراك لأفضل مدرك فهو أفضل لاذّ وملتذّ ويكون ذلك أمراً لا يقاس إلى شيء

Philosophy

The Necessary Existent is the greatest attainer of the greatest objects of attainment—which is Its essence—[through] the most complete, eternal attainment of Its splendor, grandeur, and station. The most pleasurable state is Its state [of attaining] Its essence, having no need for something external, since It gives beauty and grandeur.[128]

پس واجب وجود بزرگترین اندریابنده است مر بزرگترین اندر یافته را که خود است تمامترین اندر یافتن دایم بآن بهاء و بآن عظمت وبآن منزلت پس خوشترین حالی حال وی است بخود که ورا حاجت نیست بچیزی بیرون که او را جمال و عظمت دهد

In the *Pointers*, Ibn Sīnā continues to describe the First as "a lover of Its essence, and the object of love through Its essence."[129] He characterizes the First in similar terms in his commentary on the *Theology of Aristotle*, saying It is "beloved in Itself—not insofar as It is simply an object of attainment and an intelligible, but rather insofar as It is beloved in Its substance."[130]

Ibn Sīnā's use of the term "love" (*ʿišq*) has long featured in discussions of his alleged mysticism and Sufism.[131] Calling the First both lover (*ʿāšiq*) and beloved (*maʿšūq*) in *Pointers* VIII.18 leads Ibn Sīnā to explain what "real love" (*al-ʿišq al-ḥaqīqī*) is, and to differentiate it from desire (*šawq*) and plain, unqualified love (*ʿišq*):

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127 *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.7, 297.14; *al-Najāt*, 282.10–11.

128 *Dānišnāma*, Ilāhiyyāt, 37, 108.10–109.1.

129 *wa-l-awwalu ʿāšiqun li-ḏātihi maʿšūqun li-ḏātihi*; *al-Išārāt*, VIII.18, 351.4. Cf. his similar statement in *Cure* and *Salvation*; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, VIII.7, 297.12; *al-Najāt*, 282.7–8.

130 *bi-ḏātihi ʿišqun lā min ḥayṯu huwa mudrakun faqaṭ wa-maʿqūlun bal min ḥayṯu huwa ʿišqun fī jawharihi*; "*Commentary on the* Theology of Aristotle," 44.9–10.

131 One of the earliest examples of this is Mehren's inclusion of Ibn Sīnā's *Epistle on Love* in volume three of his anthology of Ibn Sīnā's so-called mystical treatises; Mehren, *Traités Mystiques*, 1894. Speaking of Ibn Sīnā's so-called esoteric philosophy, Netton argues that considering Ibn Sīnā's use of the motif of love, allegory, light symbolism, and the angelic world should lead one to see him more as a Sufi than a rationalist philosopher. He characterizes the *Epistle on Love* as being exemplary of Ibn Sīnā's mystical theology; Netton, *Allāh Transcendent*, 174–175.

العشق الحقيقيّ هو الابتهاج بتصوّر حضرة ذاتٍ ما والشوق هو الحركة إلى تتميم هذا الابتهاج ... فكلّ مشتاق فإنّه قد نال شيئاً ما وفاته شيء وأمّا العشق فمعنى آخر

Real love is deriving joy from conceptualizing the presence of a certain essence. Desire is the motion toward completing that joy ... Every desiring being has acquired a certain something and then missed something. Love, however, is something else.[132]

When the rational soul achieves its perfection, it experiences an affective response. Ibn Sīnā has primarily expressed this in *Pointers* VIII and elsewhere as pleasure (*laḏḏa*, *iltiḏāḏ*), but here expresses it as joy (*bahja*, *ibtihāj*) and love (*ʿišq*).[133] This is real, true love. Love, when it is not qualified as real or true, is something else. I will address this below with VIII.19.

Having once acquired and subsequently lost one's perfection leads to a desire (*šawq*) to reacquire it. This initial acquisition is what Ibn Sīnā refers to in VIII.13 as an alertness (*tanabbuh*) to one's perfection. He puts it similarly in *Lesser Destination*, *Cure*, and *Salvation*, saying,

الشوق يتبع رأياً وليس رأياً أوّليّاً بل رأياً مكتسباً فهؤلاء إذا اكتسبوا هذا الرأي لزم النفس ضرورةً هذا الشوقُ

Desire follows a certain notion; not a primary notion, but an acquired one. Whenever they acquire this notion, this desire necessarily adheres to the soul.[134]

The acquired notion preceding desire is precisely what results from the concept that in *Pointers* VIII.8 he calls Taste (*ḏawq*).[135] Having once Tasted, or been aler-

132 *al-Iškārāt*, VIII.18, 350.13–14. I translate *ʿišq* as love, rather than "excessive" or "passionate" love, since Ibn Sīnā gives no indication here or in the *Epistle on Love* that his use of *ʿišq* is in any way differentiated from *ḥubb* or *maḥabba*, contra what Ṭūsī suggests in his commentary; Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ*, 2:1006.13.

133 Ṭūsī observes that Ibn Sīnā substituted *laḏḏa* with *ʿišq* because it is not customary to use the term "pleasure" in reference to the First; Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ*, 2:1006.6–7. Ibn Sīnā also presents the affective response to making contact with the supernal realm as "joy" (*bahja*) in his commentary on the *Theology of Aristotle*; the relevant passage is translated on pp. 192–193.

134 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XV, 134.6–7; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.7, 353.3–5; *al-Najāt*, 330.25–27.

135 According to Lizzini, the term notion (*raʾy*) here stands in for "conceptualization" (*taṣawwur*), which would then be followed by assent (*taṣdīq*). The former is how we conceive things in our minds, while the latter confirms or denies that our mental conception corresponds to reality. Since "every constituent element of knowledge implies the lack of another element," there is a desire (*šawq*) to acquire it; Lizzini, "Avicenna: The Pleasure of Knowledge," 266–270 (quotes on 269).

ted to by experience, one's proper perfection, and subsequently losing it, leads to a desire (*šawq*) to reacquire it. This manifests in a motion toward that perfection.[136]

Returning to the ranks of joy, the First is followed by those who find joy in It as well as in their selves, insofar as they take joy in It. These are the holy, intellectual substances (i.e., the celestial intellects and souls). Neither the First nor the intellectual substances experience desire (*šawq*), as they are already perfect beings.[137]

They are followed by those who do experience desire, namely the "desiring lovers" (*al-ʿušš̆āq al-muštāqīna*). These souls have acquired a certain acquisition, and so have experienced a certain measure of pleasure. Since that acquisition is fleeting, they desire to acquire it once again. This yearning is the source of a certain measure of harm, though not a great harm; it is akin to the "harm" experienced while being tickled or scratching an itch. This desire can also lead to joy, insofar as it is the impetus for a certain motion. When that motion leads to an acquisition of the appropriate perfection, it results in joy. This state of "yearning lover" is the greatest state that a human soul can achieve in the lower world. It can only be rid of desire for further perfection in the afterlife. Below the souls of the yearning lovers are the souls which go back and forth between lordliness and baseness; in other words, souls whose attention vacillates between the celestial and earthly realms. Below them are the souls that are "immersed in the world of ill-fated nature, whose bent necks do not have junctures."[138]

Ibn Sīnā concludes this chapter (**VIII.19**) by observing that "every corporeal thing has a perfection proper to it, a volitional or natural love for that perfection, and a natural or volitional desire for it when it is separated from it."[139] This love is not the rational soul's "real love" (*al-ʿišq al-ḥaqīqī*), but the "something else" that Ibn Sīnā refers to in VIII.18. The love and desire of something is either the natural or voluntary response that occurs in relation to one's proper perfections. This short statement conveys *in nuce* what is found in Ibn Sīnā's *Epistle on Love*, in which he discusses love as it relates to inanimate simple beings, the

136 Ibn Sīnā also speaks of desire as a motion to acquire perfection in *Lesser Destination*, *Cure*, and *Salvation*; *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XV, 137.5; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.7, 355.5–6; *al-Najāt*, 332.17.

137 *al-Iš̆ārāt*, VIII.18, 350.13–14.

138 *al-maǧmūsatu fī ʿālami l-ṭabīʿati l-manḥūsati llatī lā mafāṣila li-riqābihā l-mankūsati*; VIII.18, 352.4–5.

139 [*wajadta*] *li-kulli šayʾin mina l-ašyāʾi l-jusmāniyyati kamālan yaḫuṣṣuhu wa-ʿišqan irādiyyan aw ṭabīʿiyyan li-ḏālika l-kamāli wa-šawqan ṭabīʿiyyan aw irādiyyan ilay-hi iḏā fāraqahu*; VIII.19, 352.7–9.

vegetative soul and its faculties, the animal soul and its faculties, and rational souls (human and celestial). He begins by affirming,

فبيّنٌ أنّ لكلّ واحد من الموجودات المدبّرة شوقاً طبيعيّاً وعشقاً غريزيّاً ويلزم ضرورةً أن يكون العشق في هذه الأشياء سبباً للوجود لها

It is clear that every existent [under God's] design has a natural desire and an inborn love. It follows necessarily that, for these beings, love is the cause of their existence.[140]

In this epistle, love (*ʿišq*) signifies an impetus to acquire one's perfection and achieve one's final cause. All existents—whether they be inanimate, simple entities like prime matter (*al-hayūlā l-ḥaqīqiyya*), non-self-subsisting forms (*al-ṣuwaru llatī lā yumkinu la-hā l-qiwāmu bi-l-infirādi bi-ḏātihi*), and accidents; the faculties of vegetative, animal, or rational souls; or celestial beings—have this natural love[141] to fulfill their final cause. Additionally, animal souls have a voluntary love[142] that can override the aims of innate love when pursuing the latter will lead to a harm greater than avoiding it would.

Inanimate beings, Ibn Sīnā remarks, are "connected to an inborn love, from which they are never free. It is a cause of their existence," just like the final cause.[143] When it comes to prime matter (*hayūlā*), for example, he says it has a

140 Mehren, *Traités Mystiques*, 1894, 3:2.4–6; cf. trans. in Fackenheim, "A Treatise on Love," 212; and Rundgren, "Avicenna on Love," 53. Despite being included in Mehren's anthology of Ibn Sīnā's mystical writings, the text does not support a mystical or Sufi interpretation. It does not express a theory of union with the divine, as Abrahamov and Denomy both aver; Abrahamov, *Divine Love*, 25; Denomy, *The Heresy of Courtly Love*, 30–31. Ibn Sīnā uses love as a metaphor to express metaphysical notions of perfection. Much like the final chapters of the *Pointers*, however, the mere presence of Sufi terminology has sufficed for scholars to classify this text as mystical or Sufi; cf. Cavaleiro de Macedo, "Avicena e la Filosofia Oriental." Von Grunebaum rightly characterizes this work as a "tightly-knit presentation of the soul and its constituent parts" within Ibn Sīnā's philosophy, adding later that it is a work of philosophy in the strictest sense of the term; von Grunebaum, "Avicenna's Risâla fî 'l-ʿišq and Courtly Love," 234–235. Ibn Sīnā is not, as Goodman declares, combining earthly and celestial love in the manner of Sufis, Kabbalists, and Christian mystics; Goodman, *Avicenna*, 72.

141 Expressed as *ʿišq ṭabīʿī* in the *Pointers* and *ʿišq ġarīzī* in the *Epistle on Love*.

142 Expressed as *ʿišq irādī* in the *Pointers* and *ʿišq iḫtiyārī* in the *Epistle on Love*.

143 *qarīnu ʿišqin ġarīziyyin lā yaḥlū ʿan-hu l-battata wa-huwa sababun la-hu fī wujūdihi*; Mehren, *Traités Mystiques*, 1894, 3:6.9; cf. trans. in Fackenheim, "A Treatise on Love," 215. Ġazālī criticizes Ibn Sīnā, saying that one can only love what one knows, therefore love does not apply to inanimate beings: "Love can only be conceived after knowledge and perception, since man can only love what he knows. Therefore, it is inconceivable that an inanimate object be characterized by love. In fact, it is [only] a property of a living perceiver … Love consists of a natural inclination toward something pleasurable. When

natural love to be informed; when matter is not informed, it has a natural yearning (i.e., desire) to be so.[144] Similarly, the faculties of vegetative souls possess an inborn love for their perfections (*kamāl*), which once again is equivalent to fulfilling their final cause. Love for the nutritive faculty (*quwwat al-taġḏiya*), for example, is the source of its desire for the presence of food in order to maintain the body; for the faculty of growth (*quwwat al-tanmiya*), it is the source of its desire to increase the body in the appropriate proportions; for the reproductive faculty (*quwwat al-tawlīd*), it is source of the desire to produce a being that is similar to itself.[145]

The same can be said for Ibn Sīnā's discussion of love with regard to the animal soul's faculties. Innate love for the faculty of ire, for example, is the source of its inclination toward revenge and domination.[146] The animal soul, however, also has a second kind of love, this being what he calls voluntary love (*ʿišq iḫtiyārī*/*irādī*). This is when the faculty turns away from its inborn love when pursuing its aims would result in more harm than benefit. By way of example, Ibn Sīnā mentions a donkey who, upon seeing a wolf, ceases to gnaw on hay, focusing instead on fleeing from danger. Here, the love and benefit of self-preservation overrides the love of sustenance and is the source of the desire to flee.[147]

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that inclination becomes firm and strong, it is called *ʿišq*" (*lā yutaṣawwaru l-maḥabbatu illā baʿda maʿrifatin wa-idrākin iḏ lā yuḥibbu l-insānu illā mā yaʿrifuhu wa-li-ḏālika lam yutaṣawwar an yataṣṣifa bi-l-ḥubbi jamādun bal huwa min ḫāṣṣiyyati l-ḥayyi l-mudriki … fa-l-ḥubbu ʿibāratun ʿan mayli l-ṭabʿi ilā l-šayʾi l-muliḏḏi fa-in taʾakkada ḏālika l-maylu wa-qawiya summiya ʿišqan*); *Iḫyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, 5:6.4–10; cf. trans. in Ormsby, *Love, longing, intimacy and contentment*, 10–11. Ġazālī misses—or perhaps ignores—that Ibn Sīnā uses love metaphorically here. In his analysis of Ġazālī's criticism, van den Bergh also misses the metaphor. Emphasizing the accuracy of Ġazālī's observation that the lifeless cannot love, van den Bergh weighs this against what he sees as Ibn Sīnā's Neoplatonic mysticism, in which "love is wider than knowledge" and "can be extended over the inorganic;" van den Bergh, "The 'Love of God' in Ghazālī's *Vivification of Theology*," 307.

144 Mehren, *Traités Mystiques*, 1894, 3:6.10–11; trans. in Fackenheim, "A Treatise on Love," 215. As such, one must bear in mind that neither natural love nor natural desire is a product of consciousness. This is an apparent contradiction with what Ibn Sīnā says in Physics I.2 of the *Cure*. There, according to McGinnis, Ibn Sīnā maintains that "uninformed matter is wholly inert and neither desires new forms nor sheds off old forms;" Ruffus and McGinnis, "Willful Understanding," 170; citing *The Physics of* The Healing, I.2, 21 f.; and McGinnis, "Making Something out of Nothing."

145 Mehren, *Traités Mystiques*, 1894, 3:7.10–8.3; trans. in Fackenheim, "A Treatise on Love," 215–216.

146 Mehren, *Traités Mystiques*, 1894, 3:8.13–14; trans. in Fackenheim, "A Treatise on Love," 216.

147 Mehren, *Traités Mystiques*, 1894, 3:9.8–10; trans. in Fackenheim, "A Treatise on Love," 217.

As for "divine souls" (*nufūs ilāhiyya*, meaning rational souls) in humans and celestial beings, their perfection and final cause is to contemplate intelligibles (*maʿqūlāt*) and the First Cause/Pure Good. As such, they have a natural love to do so. For the celestial beings, who are eternally in a state of perfection, their love is ever-present; as such, they have no desire. For human rational souls, love is present when they are in a state of perfection, but this state is ephemeral given the impositions that result from their association with a body. When they are not contemplating intelligibles, they have a natural desire (*šawq ġarīzī*) to do so.[148]

Although Ibn Sīnā wrote the *Epistle on Love* and the *Pointers* at opposite ends of his career, there is substantial congruity between his discussions of love and desire in them. All beings, from lowly, inanimate rocks to the rational soul, have an innate drive to achieve their perfection and to fulfill their final cause. In both texts, he calls this a natural love. This innate love is the principle of the yearning to acquire one's perfection. Once this has occurred, there is a desire (*šawq*) to reacquire it. Real love, as Ibn Sīnā clarifies in the *Pointers*, however, is the affective response that rational souls receive when contemplating the Truth. Despite Mehren's inclusion of the *Pointers* and the *Epistle on Love* in his anthology of Ibn Sīnā's "mystical treatises," the discussions in both texts correspond with Ibn Sīnā's rationalist epistemology and fit Mohammed Arkoun's characterization of the philosophers' (*falāsifa*) concept of *ʿišq* as being "intellectualized."[149]

6 Returning to the Final Destination

Although *Pointers* VIII routinely appears as evidence of Ibn Sīnā's mysticism and Sufism, there is no hint of either here. In other words, there is no evidence of either support for the soul's union with the divine or a non- or supra-

148 Mehren, *Traités Mystiques*, 1894, 3:21.12–17; trans. in Fackenheim, "A Treatise on Love," 224–225.

149 Arkoun, "'Ishq." While mysticism can be "intellectualized"—in fact, this is how Afnan describes Ibn Sīnā's alleged mysticism—Arkoun seems to be using this term to contrast the *falāsifa*'s use of *ʿišq* with that of the Sufis; for Afnan's discussion of what he calls Ibn Sīnā's "intellectualized" mysticism, see his *Avicenna: His Life and Works*, 188. Ramón Guerrero likewise concludes that the *Epistle on Love* is a philosophical text, not a mystical one, due to its similarities with Ibn Sīnā's discussion of emanation in Metaphysics IX of the *Cure*; "Avicena: sobre el amor," 261. ʿIrāqī reaches a similar conclusion regarding Ibn Sīnā's concept of *ʿišq* as he elaborated it in the *Epistle on Love*, saying that this epistle does not depart from Ibn Sīnā's general philosophical system; as cited in Bālī, *al-Ittijāh al-išrāqī*, 64–65.

rational epistemology. This chapter does not contain a discussion of "gnostic joy," as Hawi translates *bahja*.[150] Rather, Ibn Sīnā seeks first to demonstrate that internal, intellectual pleasures and pains are superior to external, physical pleasures and pains. Having laid this foundation, he then discusses the nature of the human, rational soul, and the characteristics that will lead it to experience happiness or misery in this life and the next. In so doing, he utilizes the analytical example of the "knower" versus the "non-knower," by which he very clearly means someone who struggles to perfect his intellectual faculties versus someone who does not. While Ibn Sīnā's use of the term knower (*ʿārif*)—along with other terms like Taste (*ḏawq*), desire (*šawq*), and love (*ʿišq*)—may provide superficial reason to see this chapter as forming part of Ibn Sīnā's mystical or Sufi philosophy, I have demonstrated that the contents of this chapter are no different from what Ibn Sīnā discusses elsewhere. There remains, as of yet, no cause to see the *Pointers* as representing Ibn Sīnā's mysticism or Sufism, or as standing apart from the rest of his corpus in a subset of esoteric works.

Clarifying the distinction between the knower and the non-knower provides Ibn Sīnā an opportunity to allude to numerous aspects of his psychology, epistemology, ontology, and eschatology. This is naturally so, since a comprehensive investigation into the soul of the type done in Metaphysics of the Rational Soul embraces topics covered throughout both natural philosophy and metaphysics.

Ibn Sīnā conceived the *Provenance and Destination* as his first monograph dedicated to the Metaphysics of the Rational Soul. He would later follow up on this with two other such monographs: *Immolation Destination* and *Lesser Destination*. There are abundant, clear parallels between *Pointers* VIII and these three texts: *Provenance and Destination* III.12–15, on transmigration of the soul and happiness and misery in the afterlife; *Immolation Destination* VII, on the destination of the soul; and *Lesser Destination* XV, on happiness (*al-saʿāda*) and misery in the afterlife. Ibn Sīnā copied this latter directly into Metaphysics IX.7 of the *Cure*, and did so once again in the metaphysics of *Salvation*. Following his habit in the monographs, Ibn Sīnā called Metaphysics IX.7 "On the Destination" (*fī l-maʿād*). The relevant section of *Salvation* is similarly called "On the Destination of Human Souls" (*fī maʿād al-anfus al-insāniyya*). All of these titles express a shared concern with the human soul's ultimate destination in the afterlife; in other words, its *maʿād*. Parallels appear in other sections of his *summae*, like the metaphysics of *Elements of Philosophy*; *Guidance* III.6,

150 Hawi, "Ibn Sina and Mysticism," 95.

on happiness (*al-saʿāda*) in the afterlife; and *Cure* VIII.7, on intellectual pleasure, which was also copied in *Salvation*.

Despite the *Pointers*'s reputation for allusiveness and abstruseness, by giving *Pointers* VIII the title "On Joy and *Happiness* [*al-saʿāda*]" (emphasis mine), Ibn Sīnā clearly communicates to us what subject he addresses and where we can find his fuller expositions of it. It may have been clearer had he also incorporated *al-maʿād* into the title; but, as he says in the prologue to the *Pointers*, the purpose of this book is to feed us the choicest parts of wisdom, not to serve us the whole dish.[151]

Pointers VII relates the incorporeal nature and absolute unity of the intellect, God as pure intellect, providence and God as first principle of the universe, and theodicy, or an explanation of the presence of good and evil in the universe. The final sections of *Pointers* VII, which focus on the distribution of evil among created beings and the relative number of humans that will experience joy or torment in the afterlife, present a natural transition to *Pointers* VIII, which adds the nature of perfection, pleasure, and pain; and the soul's ultimate pleasure or punishment after death. The next stop in our journey through Ibn Sīnā's Metaphysics of the Rational Soul, *Pointers* IX, focuses on the intellectual knowledge that leads to the ultimate joy in this life and the afterlife.

151 *al-Išārāt*, 395.1–2.

CHAPTER 3

The Soul's Intellectual Development

Having introduced and defined the knower and the intellectual joy that he may experience in this life and the afterlife in *Pointers* VIII, Ibn Sīnā is now prepared to discuss the stations of the knowers' (*maqāmāt al-ʿārifīn*) intellectual progression in this life, the focus of the ninth chapter. Much as *Pointers* VIII differentiates between intellectual and physical pleasures and pains, and how this applies to knowers and non-knowers, the dividing line between knowers and non-knowers remains a recurring element in *Pointers* IX.

The sections of this chapter can be categorized into three broad topics. To start, Ibn Sīnā distinguishes knowers from non-knowers in terms of their approach to and goals for engaging in activities such as asceticism and worship (IX.1–6). Next, he discusses the relations of the human theoretical intellect to the secondary intelligibles, using the metaphor of stages (sg. *daraja*) (IX.7–17). After a few summative reminders (IX.18–20), he concludes by discussing the characteristics of the knower after he has "arrived" (*wuṣūl*), having developed a familiarity with and habitude for making contact with the active intellect (IX.21–27).

Much has been made of the style that Ibn Sīnā adopted in the *Pointers*, especially with regard to the chapters that are the focus of this study. Inati begins her commentary on *Pointers* IX by reiterating her conclusion that it represents the "most original part" of the *Pointers*.[1] Much has also been made of the allegedly Sufi and/or mystical character of the final three chapters of the *Pointers*. Although *Pointers* VIII–X are often referenced together in this regard, the heart of these claims is *Pointers* IX, "The Stations of the Knowers."[2] Such assertions rely heavily on the central role of the knower and his

1 Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 30.

2 Mukhtar Ali has argued that Ibn Sīnā was "compelled to accept unveiling" as a legitimate means for arriving at the truth, and that *Pointers* IX evinces him experimenting with "various modalities of perception and types of esoteric knowledge;" *Philosophical Sufism*, 4. Etin Anwar remarks that, "for a long time," *Pointers* IX "has been regarded as a mystical work;" "Ibn Sīnā's Philosophical Theology of Love," 340. Mirvat ʿIzzat Bālī observes that "… the ninth chapter … is considered among the most important chapters of the Ṣūfi section of this book [the *Pointers*];" *al-Ittijāh al-išrāqī*, 307. Aminrazavi declares, "For those who question the presence of a mystical dimension … in Ibn Sīnā's thought, *On the Stations of the Knowers* leaves no doubt" and that Ibn Sīnā "offers an explanation of the Sufi doctrine and openly defends gnostic

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progression through various stages. The knower is taken to be a Sufi, mystic, or gnostic, and the stages are taken to be stages of Sufi-inspired experiential knowledge of God. In this interpretation, the stages ultimately lead to annihilation of the self and union with God. As we have seen, however, the knower does not appear only in the ninth chapter, but actually first emerges in the eighth. The context in which he appears is certainly not unique to the *Pointers*. Rather, as I argued in the previous chapter, Ibn Sīnā borrows his discussion of the ultimate destination (*al-maʿād*) of the rational soul in *Pointers* VIII of the *Pointers* wholesale from his other works, spanning the entire course of his career.

That being said, it is correct to observe that *Pointers* VIII–X do stand out from Ibn Sīnā's other works. This is because he does not frame the elaboration of his epistemology and eschatology solely around the rational soul and the prophet, but around the rational soul and the knower; this latter term may not appear in his other texts, but the role it plays is the same. Ibn Sīnā's use of the metaphor of the knower does lead him to a different exposition of the relations of the human intellect to the active intellect.[3] Therefore, while *Pointers* IX does feature numerous parallels with other epistemological discussions (e.g., De Anima IV.2 of the *Cure*), the parallels to be found in this chapter are not as abundant as those found in *Pointers* VII, VIII, and X.

1 Differentiating Knowers from Non-knowers

Ibn Sīnā begins the ninth chapter by introducing the concepts of "stations" (*maqāmāt*) and "stages" (*darajāt*) that uniquely belong to the knowers during their lives in this world (**IX.1**). He explains these concepts by analogy, describing the knowers' states in this world as having reached a condition similar to the rational soul's existence separated from the body in the afterlife.

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and Sufi method [*sic*] of attaining truth;" "How Ibn Sīnian," 211; and Aminrazavi, "Mysticism in Arabic and Islamic Philosophy," Spring 2009. Corbin notes that the Iranian tradition has long seen mysticism as integral to the *Pointers*: "It is true that Avicenna's *ʿerfān* has always been taken seriously by that [i.e. the Iranian philosophical] tradition, and that no one belonging to it has ever doubted that the author of the last section of the *Ishārāt* … was an *ʿārif*, a mystic-gnostic;" *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, 39.

3 The standard exposition of a baby initially lacking any ability to write, then growing into an adult who has mastered the skill of writing as a metaphor for the development of the human intellect from full potentiality to full actuality does appear in *Pointers* III, which features Ibn Sīnā's standard account of his epistemology.

There are stations and stages that are unique to the knowers in their earthly lives, to the exclusion of others. It is as though, while they are [wrapped] in the *jilbāb*s of their bodies, they had already removed and rid themselves of them, [moving] toward the Realm of Sanctity.[4]

إنّ للعارفين مقامات ودرجات يخصّون بها في حياتهم الدنيا دون غيرهم فكأنّهم وَهُم في جلابيب من أبدانهم قد نضوها وتجرّدوا عنها إلى عالم القدس

Due to the knowers' ability to experience otherworldly happiness, they acquire certain knowledge and experiences, some of which they share with others, and some of which they keep to themselves.[5] Ibn Sīnā remarks that the story of Salāmān and Absāl serves as an allegory in which Salāmān represents the reader and Absāl represents the reader's degree of knowledge (*ʿirfān*).[6] The implica-

4 *al-Išārāt*, IX.1, 355.1–2. Stroumsa translates *al-ʿārifīna* as "those who have divine knowledge," and later characterizes their means to acquiring that knowledge as "spiritual;" Stroumsa, "Avicenna's Philosophical Stories," 188–189. Insofar as the knowers are in possession of knowledge of the intelligibles from the supernal realm, saying they possess divine knowledge is acceptable, if liable to misinterpretation. I do not see a basis, however, for calling their means of acquiring knowledge spiritual. According to Elkaisy-Friemuth, Ibn Sīnā states that some rational souls can "absolutely transcend their bodies and everything around them through the power of spiritual exercises;" Elkaisy-Friemuth, *God and Humans in Islamic Thought*, 113. She makes this claim while discussing *Pointers* IX, though she does not cite any passages. As Ibn Sīnā makes clear throughout *Pointers* VIII–X, and in this passage in particular, this is absolutely not the case. The rational soul, while still associated with a body, can only reach an approximation of being separated from the body. This is far from what Elkaisy-Friemuth calls the Gnostic Sufism of Junayd or Bisṭāmī.

5 Inati claims that what the knowers keep to themselves has to do with their "exclusive knowledge," while what they share with others has to do with their "exclusive experiences." The text of the *Pointers* does not allow for such a distinction. Inati does not provide any evidence to support her claim; Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 30.

6 *al-Išārāt*, IX.1, 355.6–8. Despite the common association of *ʿirfān* (and *maʿrifa*) with Sufism and *ʿilm* with science, Ibn Sīnā does not seem to maintain a meaningful distinction between these terms. There is no reason to assume, as for example Hawi does, that Ibn Sīnā's use of *maʿrifa* or *ʿirfān* was influenced by Sufism or mysticism, and thereby to see it as denoting esoteric, gnostic, or mystical knowledge; Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, 267. For more on this, see Rapoport, "Sufi Vocabulary, but Avicennan Philosophy," 149–156. In his commentary, Ṭūsī discusses the allegory of *Salāmān and Absāl* in great detail; Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ*, 2:1025.3–1028.20. For the only monograph on Ibn Sīnā's use of allegory, see Heath, *Allegory and Philosophy in Avicenna*. Cruz Hernández's translation features curious errors regarding the Arabic text. Concerning the story of Salāmān and Absāl, his translation reads, "you should know that Salāmān is a symbol of you and Absāl represents allegorically your degree of *gnosis*, *the reserved science*." Cruz Hernández indicates in footnotes that the Arabic that he translates as "gnosis" is *maʿrifa*, and as "reserved science" is *sirr*. While he acknowledges that his trans-

tion seems to be that this allegory will serve to elucidate the concepts of station and degree. However, Ibn Sīnā makes no more than this allusive reference to it. One can presume that, by merely alluding to Salāmān and Absāl, Ibn Sīnā assumes that his reader will be familiar with their story; or, conforming with his didactic style in the *Pointers*, the purpose of his allusiveness is to ensure that the reader must truly want to learn the lesson contained within this story, and is willing to work hard in order to obtain it.[7]

Ibn Sīnā continues by developing a theme that he began in *Pointers* VIII: distinguishing between the characteristics of the knower and the non-knower. He discusses the differences between ascetics (sg. *zāhid*), worshippers (sg. *ʿābid*), and knowers (sg. *ʿārif*) (**IX.2**).

المعرض عن متاع الدنيا وطيّباتها يخصّ باسم الزاهد والمواظب على نفل العبادات من القيام والصيام ونحوهما يخصّ باسم العابد والمنصرف بفكره إلى قدس الجبروت مستديماً لشروق نور الحقّ في سرّه يخصّ باسم العارف

One who abandons the possessions and pleasures of this world is distinguished by the name "ascetic." One who devotes himself to the supererogatory performance of acts of worship, such as nocturnal devotions, fasting, and the like, is distinguished by the name "worshipper." One who *turns his thought* toward the Sanctity of Dominion, continuously awaiting the illumination of the light of the Truth in his innermost self is distinguished by the name "knower."[8]

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lation is not literal, but rather one that both "respects the sense of the original Arabic text and the exigencies of the Castilian language," neither of these terms even appears in this section of the *Pointers*. What Cruz Hernández claims as *maʿrifa* is actually *ʿirfān*, a misreading that is easy to explain. Nothing resembling *sirr*, however, is present in the text. Additionally, Cruz Hernández neglects to translate the final sentence of this section; Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 62 (note 2, cont'd from p. 61), 63; emphasis added. He appears, in fact, to be translating Goichon's French translation, which inserts "the secret science" after *al-ʿirfān* without indicating that it is not found in the Arabic original; Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 485.

7 On the relationship between Ibn Sīnā's Salāmān and Absāl and the protagonists of Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, see Stroumsa, "The Makeover of *Ḥayy*."

8 *al-Išārāt*, IX.2, 355.10–356.1 (emphasis added). Without any basis in the text, Cruz Hernández adds, "in purity, they give the name mystic to him who has experienced ecstasy;" Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 63. Caner Dagli misreads the preposition *bi-* in *wa-l-munṣarifu bi-fikrihi* as instrumental ("he who moves to the holy empyrean [*jabarūt*] through contemplation") rather than the *bi-* of transitivity; Dagli, *Ibn Al-ʿArabi and Islamic Intellectual Culture*, 28.

This is Ibn Sīnā's first step in establishing a stark and critical distinction between those he identifies as knowers and those he identifies as ascetics and worshippers.[9] The focal role of the knower is unique to the *Pointers*, and the language featured in this section may superficially lend itself to a mystical interpretation (e.g. *ʿārif*, *sirr*, *quds al-jabarūt*, *šurūq nūr al-ḥaqq*). Goichon does just this, adding "he who knows ecstasy" to the end of the passage as it appears in her translation.[10] Gómez Nogales applies a thoroughly mystical interpretation to this passage, claiming "the mystic (*ʿārif*) is the gnostic knower."[11] Dagli argues that Ibn Sīnā's use of *sirr* is precisely how Sufis use it, meaning "the most inward part of the heart or soul which is the supreme seat of consciousness and the place where man is able to have his connection with God."[12] Aminrazavi points to this and subsequent passages and concludes that, for Ibn Sīnā, "mystical knowledge is not only a possibility but a necessary consequence of asceticism."[13]

Even if Ibn Sīnā's use of the term "knower" is unique, the knower's activity is not. Ibn Sīnā's statements on "discursive thought" (*fikr*) elsewhere clarify the meaning of the activity that he attributes to the knower in this passage.

De Anima, *Cure*

Discursive thoughts and considerations are movements that dispose the [rational] soul toward receiving the emanation [of intelligibles from the active intellect], just as middle terms [of syllogisms] dispose [it] to receive the conclusion [of the syllogism], confirming it in the most intense way.[14]

فإنّ الأفكار والتأمّلات حركات معدّة للنفس نحو قبول الفيض كما أنّ الحدود الوسطى معدّة بنحو أشدّ تأكيداً لقبول النتيجة

9 This is not to say that being a knower precludes one from also being an ascetic or worshipper. A knower can also be an ascetic and worshipper, but a mere ascetic or worshipper is not also a knower.

10 Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 485–486. Elamrani-Jamal reproduces Goichon's translation without noting her unwarranted addition; Elamrani-Jamal, "Vision contemplative," 147.

11 Gómez Nogales, "El misticismo persa de Avicena," 80.

12 To evince the mystical meaning of Ibn Sīnā's *sirr*, Dagli points to Ibn Sīnā's later use of *talṭīf al-sirr li-l-išāra* in *Pointers* IX.8, which he translates as "making one's mystery more subtle for the sake of realization;" Dagli, *Ibn Al-ʿArabi and Islamic Intellectual Culture*, 28–29. This translation, however, makes little sense. Additionally, Dagli neglects to consider the broader context in which these words appear. Here, Ibn Sīnā pairs "rendering the innermost self"—by which he means rational soul—"sensitive to attention" with discursive thought (*fikr*) and intellectual training (*riyāḍa*).

13 Aminrazavi, "How Ibn Sīnian," 210.

14 *Avicenna's De Anima*, V.5, 235.8–10; cf. Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 184–185.

Posterior Analytics, *Cure*

والفكرة حركة ذهن الإنسان نحو المبادئ للمطالب ليرجع منها إلى المطالب

Discursive thought is the movement of the human mind toward the principles of the problems [whose solution is sought] in order to work down from them to the problems.[15]

These passages from the *Cure* show how mistaken it is to apply a mystical interpretation to this passage in the *Pointers*. Despite superficial appearances, the language and imagery that Ibn Sīnā uses in IX.2 is thoroughly rational. The knower is not concerned with prayer and fasting *per se*, but rather with the purely intellectual activity of focusing one's thought on the Sanctity of Dominion (the supernal realm, where the celestial intellects reside) in order to prepare one's innermost self (*sirr*, the rational soul) to receive intellectual illumination.[16] His use of discursive thought (*fikr*) is associated with the mental motions involved in working through syllogisms, the successful result of which leads to the rational soul's (*sirr*) initiating contact with and receiving the effluence of intelligibles from the active intellect.[17] This is something that Ibn Sīnā routinely presents using the metaphor of illumination.[18] Dag Hasse refers to Ibn Sīnā's use of the emanation metaphor as "the standard doctrine of Avicenna's psychology."[19] Herbert Davidson notes that, of the metaphors that Ibn Sīnā used to illustrate the functioning of the human intellect, he most frequently resorted to the metaphor of light.[20] This metaphor, as Tommaso Alpina explains, is not "a genuine endorsement of an illuminationist position

15 *al-Šifāʾ: al-Burhān*, 14:259.18–19; trans. from Gutas, "Intuition and Thinking," 5.

16 This is not to suggest that Ibn Sīnā thought that prayer and other religious rituals could not aid one's intellectual efforts; see Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 206.

17 Ibn Sīnā states quite clearly in *Epistle on Discussion of the Rational Soul*—likely his last composition—that *sirr* is another name for the rational soul; Rapoport, "Sufi Vocabulary, but Avicennan Philosophy," 165; Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 68. His use of *sirr* is not, as Goichon once remarked, "the most authentic trace of mysticism in the Avicennian oeuvre;" Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 487n4.

18 In fact, prior to the passage quoted from the De Anima of the *Cure*, Ibn Sīnā compares the active intellect's illumination of the rational soul to the sun's illumination of what was previously unseen: "Its relation to our souls is the relation of the sun to our vision" (*nisbatuhu ilā nufūsinā nisbatu l-šamsi ilā abṣārinā*); *Avicenna's De Anima*, V.4, 234.19. For an analysis of this comparison, and what it tells us about the human intellect's and active intellect's roles in intellection, see McGinnis, "New Light on Avicenna"; and Sebti, "L'Analogie de la lumière."

19 Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 183. He connects Ibn Sīnā's comparison of the active intellect to the sun, and emanation to illumination, to Aristotle's comparison of the "activating intellect" to light; Hasse, 184n598; referring to Walzer, "Aristotle's Active Intellect."

20 Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect*, 92–93.

on Avicenna's part," but instead is Ibn Sīnā's response to an epistemological problem related to the acquisition of intellectual forms.[21] On the emanation metaphor, Gutas has stated, "In the emanationist language that he inherited, Avicenna called hitting upon the middle term [of a syllogism] 'coming in contact with' (*ittiṣāl bi-*) the active intellect or a 'divine effluence' (*al-fayḍ al-ilāhī*), and restricted its function to 'illuminating' the procedures."[22]

Misunderstanding this metaphor can lead to misrepresentation of what Ibn Sīnā says in this chapter of the *Pointers*, as one finds in Maha Elkaisy-Friemuth's *God and Humans in Islamic Thought*. She concludes that Ibn Sīnā presents here a kind of knowledge that differs from the intellect's knowledge of intelligibles through contact with the active intellect. Instead, she posits that Ibn Sīnā develops a theory of mystical knowledge acquired through the human soul's conjunction with divine light.[23] It is quite clear that, in speaking of the rational soul's making contact with the active intellect in terms of illumination and emanation, Ibn Sīnā was taking recourse to common concepts and language widely used within his intellectual milieu.[24] We should not read anything mystical into this.

Ibn Sīnā continues to discuss ascetics, worshippers, and knowers, providing more detail about how knowers and non-knowers incongruently perceive asceticism and worship (**IX.3**). For non-knowers, Ibn Sīnā observes that asceticism is "a certain transactional activity, as if one purchases the goods of the afterlife with the goods of this world."[25] In other words, one abstains from the

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21 For his discussion of the analogy, see Alpina, *Subject, Definition, Activity*, 150–155 (quote on 155).

22 Gutas, "The Empiricism of Avicenna," 25.

23 Elkaisy-Friemuth, *God and Humans in Islamic Thought*, 109–118. I return to this in more detail in chapter 5.

24 In fact, the metaphor is standard in the Aristotelian tradition, beginning with Aristotle's *De Anima*, III.5 (430a16–18). On the use of "light" as a symbol for knowledge in Islamic contexts (beyond Sufism alone), see Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, ch. 3, "Knowledge is Light (Sufism)."

25 *al-zuhdu ʿinda ġayri l-ʿārifi muʿāmalatum mā yaštarī bi-matāʿi l-dunyā matāʿa l-āḫira*; *al-Išārāt*, IX.3, 356.4. Ibn Sīnā reiterates this in IX.6, observing that non-knowers abandon worldly pleasures only so that they can receive a greater number of pleasures in the afterlife; 358.12–13. For Akhtar, this passage evinces Ibn Sīnā's interest in the "connection between contemplation and mystical insight." His translation of the passage, however, forces the connection: "Asceticism without mystical insight is a sort of business transaction;" Akhtar, *Philosophers, Sufis, and Caliphs*, 220–221 and note 24. The preposition *ʿinda* here carries the common meaning of "according to." In the phrase *ġayr al-ʿārif*—literally, "un-knower"—the negative prefix *ġayr* cannot be read as "without," while the active participle *ʿārif* cannot be changed to a verbal noun such as "insight." It is not possible to read *al-zuhd ʿinda ġayri l-ʿārif* as "asceticism without mystical insight."

pleasures of the life in this world in order to obtain reward in the next.[26] For the knower—who, naturally, knows better—asceticism means "keeping oneself above what distracts his innermost self from the Truth; and it is considering oneself greater than all things, other than the Truth."[27]

As is the case with asceticism, the non-knowers also understand worship to be a transactional activity in which one performs activities in this world in exchange for a reward from God in the next world. Once again, the knower knows better.

والعبادة ... عند العارف رياضة ما لهممه وقوى نفسه المتوهّمة والمتخيّلة ليجرَّها بالتعويد عن جناب الغرور إلى جناب الحقّ فتصيرَ مسالمةً للسرّ الباطن حينما يستجلى الحقّ لا تنازعه فيخلصَ السرّ إلى الشروق الساطع

Worship ... for the knower is a certain training for his concerns[28] and for his soul's faculties of *Estimation* and *Imagination* in order to lead them, by habituation, from the side of deception to the side of truth so that they be *submissive* and *not struggle with* the innermost self when it seeks to reveal the Truth, so that the innermost self may arrive at radiant illumination.[29]

26 Gutas has characterized Ibn Sīnā's description of the ascetic's and worshipper's motivations in engaging in asceticism and worship as "mercenary," adding that Ibn Sīnā's elaboration of the "stations of the knowers" in this chapter is far from sympathetic to Sufis. See his discussion of this *tanbīh* in his "Intellect," 2014, 3–4.

27 *tanazzuhum mā ʿammā yašġalu sirrahu ʿani l-ḥaqqi wa-takabburun ʿalā kulli šay'in ġayri l-ḥaqq*; *al-Išārāt*, IX.3, 356.4–5.

28 While Inati accurately summarizes this passage in the introduction to her translation, in the translation proper she glosses the term *himamihi* as "faculties," but makes no mention of Ibn Sīnā's use—in addition to *himam*—of the word *quwā*, which more properly indicates faculties; it is not clear if she takes them to be equivalent; Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 82. Goichon, on the other hand, translates it as "preoccupations," reading, "it is a certain exercise intended to remove, through habituation, one's preoccupations, and the estimative and imaginative faculties of one's soul, from the vicinity of error by placing them in the vicinity of truth;" Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 487. While Goichon's reading is more plausible, it is nonetheless forced, as she adds "intended to remove" to the original text. Shokoufeh Taghi's translation of this passage, which speaks of the "mystic exercising mortification ... so that when the outer and inner being come face to face with the manifestation of God, the aforementioned faculty will be in harmony and unanimity," can only be characterized as loosely inspired by the text; Taghi, *Two Wings*, 203.

29 *al-Išārāt*, IX.3, 356.6–10; emphasis added. Here, Ibn Sīnā is setting the groundwork for his discussion of Imaginative and telekinetic prophecy in *Pointers* X. Cruz Hernández creatively, but inaccurately in this case, reads the verb *yastajlī* as "enter into marriage," explaining that the verb (which he incorrectly reads in the passive) is used to express "the wife being presented before the husband;" Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 64.

This is a very concise presentation of the need for training (*riyāḍa*) the corporeal faculties of Imagination and Estimation so that they aid the theoretical faculty of the rational soul in receiving the effluence of intelligibles from the active intellect.[30] By turning away from "the side of deception" Ibn Sīnā is referring to the ability of sensible data to deceive the faculties that perceive them. Reliance on information from the senses alone can lead to erroneous conclusions. The upshot of training these faculties becomes clear when we compare this passage to a similar—albeit much longer—one that appears in the *Provenance and Destination*.

ومن كان خياله قويّاً جدّاً ونفسه قويّةً جدّاً لم تشغله المحسوسات بالكلّيّة ولم تستغرقه وفضل منه ما ينتهز الفرصة من الاتّصال بذلك العالم وأمكنه ذلك في اليقظة واجتذب الخيال معه فرأى الحقّ وحفظه وعمل الخيال عمله فخيّل ما يراه كالمحسوس المبصر المسموع ... وليس تخيّلُ النبيّ يفعل هذا في الاتصال بمبادئ الكائنات بل عند سطوع العقل الفعّال إشراقه على نفسه بالمعقولات فيأخذ الخيال ويتخيّل تلك المعقولات ويصوّرها في الحسّ المشترك

He who has a very powerful Imagination[31] and a very powerful [rational] soul is not completely distracted by the sensibles. That part of him [the intellect] which misses no opportunity to come into contact with that [supernal] realm is abundant—it being possible for it [to effect this contact] also in the waking state—and pulls the Imagination along with it. It sees the truth and retains it, while the Imagination does its work representing what [the intellect] sees in images in the form of visible and audible objects of the senses ... The prophet's Imagination does not do this during contact with the principles of future things, but rather when the *active intellect radiates upon the* [*rational*] *soul and illuminates it with the intelligibles*. The Imagination then begins to represent these intelligibles and depict them in the Common Sense.[32]

Here, Ibn Sīnā takes pains to differentiate the Imagination's role in the receipt of two kinds of knowledge from the supernal realm: 1) universal knowledge

30 As Lizzini observes, the practical intellect is the "master" of the body's faculties and desires. Training the Estimation and Imagination, then, effectively establishes the dominance of the practical intellect of the body in service of the theoretical intellect; Lizzini, "Vie active," 219–236 esp. 227–236 (quote on 233).

31 On Ibn Sīnā's use of *ḫayāl* (instead of *taḫayyul* or *mutaḫayyila*) to mean Imagination—rather than Imagery, as he would later—see Gutas, "Intellect," 2014, 8n19.

32 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, 111.18, 119.8–17; emphasis added; trans. mod. from Gutas, "Imagination," 2014, 339.

(i.e., intelligibles), which originates in the active intellect, and 2) particular knowledge of past, present, or future events (*al-muġayyabāt*), which originates in the souls of the celestial spheres. In the former, the Imagination aids the rational soul's theoretical intellect, while in the latter it aids the soul's practical intellect.[33] Ibn Sīnā's description of the active intellect's radiant illumination of intelligibles upon the rational soul in this passage (*suṭūʿi l-ʿaqli l-faʿʿāli išrāqahu*) provides clear evidence that this is what he means when he speaks of the innermost self (*sirr*) arriving at the radiant illumination (*al-šurūqi l-sāṭiʿi*) of the Truth in the *Pointers*.

The necessity for training the Imagination and Estimation, along with the concerns (sg. *himma*, pl. *himam*) related to them, becomes clear when we consider passages on the rational soul's acquisition of information from the supernal realm during dreams and, less commonly, during wakefulness. The ability of the Imagination to be duped by sensible data leads Ibn Sīnā to call it "the lying Imagination."

Provenance and Destination

Most of what is seen [by the human soul in dreams] of what is to be found there [in the supernal realm] is congeneric to the states of the bodies of these souls or [to the states of] one who is close to them. Even if the contact is complete, the majority of the influence they receive from them is mostly close only to their [own] *concerns*. This contact comes about on the part of the *Estimation and Imagination* and through the [practical intellect's] use of them concerning particular things.[34]

فأكثر ممّا يرى ممّا هناك هو مجانس لأحوال بدن هذه النفس أو من يقرب منه وإن كانت تتّصل اتّصالاً كلّيّاً فإنّما يتأثّر منها في الأكثر تأثّراً أكثرياً كان يقرب من هممها وهذا الاتصال هو من جهة الوهم والخيال وباستعمالهما في الأمور الجزئيّة

33 The Imagination does not receive knowledge of universal intelligibles through making contact with the active intellect, the purview of which belongs only to the theoretical faculty of the rational soul. Rather, it translates the information which the theoretical faculty receives into sensible data. It also, along with the Estimation, aids the practical faculty of the soul in acquiring particular knowledge of unseen events past, present, and future through making contact with the souls of the celestial spheres; cf. Gutas, "Imagination," 2014; Michot, *Destinée*, 118–133. Mousavian and Mostafavi have recently challenged Gutas's interpretation of the Imagination's role in receiving knowledge from the supernal realm; "Avicenna," 42, 73–75. Sebti and Noble separately refer to Mousavian and Mostafavi's position when suggesting that the Imagination or Estimation can directly receive information from the supernal realm. I address this in greater detail in chapter 4, sections 2.1 and 2.7.

34 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, 111.17, 117.18–21; trans. mod. from Gutas, "Imagination," 2014, 339; emphasis added.

Cure

Among the people, there are those whose dreams are truer. That is when their [rational] soul has become habituated to the truth and has subdued the *lying Imagination*. Whereas for most people whose dreams can be interpreted in [another one of] their dreams, their *concerns* were preoccupied with whatever they had seen [before falling asleep].[35]

ومن الناس من يكون أصحّ أحلاماً وذلك إذا كانت نفسه اعتادت الصدق وقهرت التخيّل الكاذب وأكثر من يتّفق له أن يعبّر رؤياه في رؤياه هو من كانت همّته مشغولة بما رأى

The majority of dreams that are remembered pertain to the person who dreamed them and to those who are near him. But he whose *concerns* are the intelligibles has a fleeting glance at them and he whose *concerns* are the interests of the people sees them and is guided to them.[36]

وأكثر الأحلام التي تُذَكّر تختصّ بالإنسان الذي حلم بها وبمن يليه ومن كانت همّته المعقولات لاحت له ومن كانت همّته مصالح الناس رآها واهتدى إليها

Developing the Imagination is necessary because the intellect uses it as a tool to help translate, and subsequently store in the Imagery (*ḫayāl*), the particular knowledge that the practical intellect acquires from the celestial spheres and the universal knowledge that the theoretical intellect acquires from the active intellect.[37] Without the proper training so that the soul's faculties can be focused on the supernal realm, the content of the dream would be mishandled by the "lying" Imagination, and its focus would default to the lower, mundane concerns (*himam*) of an individual's immediate environment.

If the Imagination can cause problems through its habit of lying (i.e., jumbling the images that are transmitted to it), the Estimation can cause problems of its own. Being entirely dependent upon sensory data in its function, the Estimation tends to disbelieve immaterial truths received from the active intellect because they have no material, sensory counterpart. Through its association with the rational soul, however, the Estimation may grow so haughty as to forget this and think that it can do the rational soul's job adequately on its own, as Ibn Sīnā elaborates in his *Epistle on Love*.

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35 *Avicenna's De Anima*, IV.2, 177.7–10; emphasis added.

36 IV.2, 179.2–4; emphasis added.

37 Michot, *Destinée*, 131. Cf. *Dānišnāma*, Ṭabīʿiyyāt, 135.8–9. As we will see in *Pointers* X, this acquisition of knowledge from the celestial spheres may take the form not only of dreams, but also prophecy, waking visions, prognostications, etc.

The rational faculty seeks to administer the Estimation by means of seeking its aid in certain ways of obtaining what it seeks. But the [Estimation] acquires additional strength and boldness through the rational [faculty's] inclining toward it, to the point that it [Estimation] deems itself [capable] of acquiring what is sought without it [the rational soul]; indeed, it [Estimation] resists it [rational soul] and adorns itself with its qualities and characteristics, making claims proper to it [rational soul], fancying itself [capable] of obtaining, through giving form to intelligibles, what settles the rational soul and gives peace to the mind, acting like a bad servant whose master orders his assistance in a matter of great benefit to him who, upon achieving [it], thinks that he has succeeded in the goal without his master, and that his master is unable to do so; in fact, he thinks that he is in reality the master, without having achieved whatsoever the want that his master had endeavored himself to obtain, without him being aware of it.[38]

القوّة الوهميّة فإنّ القوّة النطقيّة تستصرفها في بعض وجوه درك مطلوبها بوجه استعانة فتستفيد من انعطاف النطقيّة عليها زيادة قوّة وحسور حتّى أنّها تترآى بنيل المطلوب دونها بل تتعصّى عليها وتتحلّى بشيمها وعلامتها وتدّعي دعواها وتتوهّم فوزها بتصوّر المعقولات ما يسكن إليه النفس ويطمئنّ إليه الذهن كعبد السوء يوعز إليه مولاه بإعانته في سانحة له مهمّة عظيمة الفائدة عند النيل فيرى أنّه ظفر بالمطلوب دون مولاه وأنّ مولاه قاصر عن ذلك بل هو المولى في الحقيقة من غير أن يكون ظفر البتّةَ بالمرام الذي تكلّف مولاه تحصيله ولا يشعر به

The goal of the knower's engaging in worship, then, is to refine his Estimation and Imagination so they properly serve their master when it is prepared to arrive at "brilliant illumination," which Ibn Sīnā also refers to as the "light of the Truth."[39] As such, the purpose of training the Imagination and Estimation is so that they "yield and do not oppose the intellect"[40] while it makes contact with the active intellect and the celestial souls. Having tamed the lower

38 Mehren, *Traités Mystiques*, 1894, 3:12.4–11; trans. modified from Fackenheim, "A Treatise on Love," 218–219. The faculty in question here is the Estimation (*al-quwwa l-wahmiyya*), which Fackenheim misleadingly translates as "imagination," a term he also uses for *taḫayyul*.

39 Sebti observes that asceticism and worship have strictly propaedeutic purposes here, serving to prepare the rational soul for making contact with the active intellect. She denies that Ibn Sīnā's epistemology has any connection to gnosticism or esotericism; Sebti, "Avicenna," 144–145.

40 *ḫaḍaʿa l-wahmu fa-lam yuʿāriḍi l-ʿaql*; *al-Išārāt*, x.24, 386.10–11. Passage translated in Gutas, "Imagination," 2014, 353.

faculties and senses, it becomes easier and easier for the rational soul to reestablish contact whenever it desires. Once the knower has accomplished this, it "becomes a firmly established disposition" in him.[41]

Ibn Sīnā elaborates the role of worship by providing an extended demonstration for the need of a law-giver who has been sent by God to provide order to humanity's affairs (**IX.4**). He begins by providing a remarkably concise account of how humanity needs a just society governed by laws revealed by a prophet sent by God who rewards good-doers and punishes evil-doers.[42]

Since man—insofar as he is able to manage his affairs on his own—is unable to do so without associating with another of his kind, and [without] the exchange and bartering [of goods][43] that occur between them—each one of them freeing his companion from any matter of concern which, if he were to undertake it on his own, many [such matters] would pile up on him, or it would be among what is prohibitively difficult (if [at all] possible)—it is necessary that there be transactions and justice among people, preserved by laws imposed by a legislator who is distinguished by meriting obedience on account of his being uniquely provided with signs that point to the fact that they are from his Lord. And it is necessary that there be recompense[44] for the good-doer and evil-doer from the Almighty and Knowing.

لمّا لم يكن الإنسان بحيث يستقلّ وحده بأمر نفسه إلّا بمشاركة آخر من بني جنسه وبمعارضة ومعاوضة تجريان بينهما يفرغ كلّ واحد منهما لصاحبه عن مهمّ لو تولّاه بنفسه لازدحم على الواحد كثيرٌ أو كان ممّا يتعسّر إن أمكن وجب أن يكون بين الناس معاملة وعدل يحفظه شرع يفرضه شارع متميّز باستحقاق الطاعة لاختصاصه بآيات تدلّ على أنّها من عند ربّه ووجب أن يكون للمحسن والمسيء جزاء من عند القدير والخبير

41 *wa-yaṣīru ḏālika malakatan mustaqirratan*; *al-Išārāt*, IX.3, 356.10.

42 For a summary Ibn Sīnā's account of politics and ethics, and why he addresses these at the end of the Metaphysics of the *Cure*, see Butterworth, "The Political Teaching of Avicenna." For a more detailed account of Ibn Sīnā's ethics, see Butterworth, "Medieval Islamic Philosophy and the Virtue of Ethics."

43 Inati translates *muʿāwaḍa* in its technical sense in jurisprudence (*fiqh*) as "commutative contract," meaning an exchange in which the things being exchanged (e.g., money for goods, or goods for goods) are of equivalent value, one being the substitute or compensation (*ʿiwaḍ*, also *badal*) for the other. While this reading is plausible, I am not certain that Ibn Sīnā intends such a technical meaning here; Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 82. Sebti renders *muʿāwaḍa* as "competition;" *Avicenne*, 210n2.

44 *jazā'* being used for both reward and punishment (hence the neutral "recompense" in Eng-

فوجب معرفة المجازي والشارع ومع المعرفة سبب حافظ للمعرفة ففرضت عليهم العبادة المذكّرة للمعبود وكرّرت عليهم ليستحفظ التذكير بالتكرير حتّى استمرّت الدعوة إلى العدل المقيم لحياة النوع

Thus, knowledge of Him who gives recompense and of the legislator is necessary; along with [this] knowledge, a cause that preserves the knowledge [is also necessary].[45] Thus, worship was imposed upon them as a reminder of the object of worship. And it was made a repeated duty so that the reminder be preserved via repetition, to the point that the call to the justice that sustains the life of the species endures.[46]

Ibn Sīnā makes similar observations in the De Anima of the *Cure* and Metaphysics of the *Cure* and *Salvation*.

De Anima, *Cure*

لمّا كان الإنسان في وجوده المقصود فيه يجب أن يكون غير مستغنٍ في بقائه عن المشاركة فلم يكن كسائر الحيوانات التي يقتصر كلّ واحد منها في نظام معيشته على نفسه وعلى الموجودات في

Since man, concerning what he aims for in his existence, necessarily cannot do without sharing [with others] for his survival, he[47] is not like other animals, each of which relies on itself and what exists in nature when it comes to ordering its own livelihood. But as for the

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lish). For its being used as reward, cf. Q 20:76; as punishment, cf. Q 9:82 and 5:95. See also Tritton, "Ḏjazā'"; Raven, "Reward and Punishment."

45 Sebti highlights the alleged Sufi context of this section and chapter by emphasizing the three instances of *maʿrifa* instead of *ʿilm* to signify "knowledge," observing that *maʿrifa* belongs to Sufi technical vocabulary and that this section appears in a chapter on the "stations of the gnostics;" *Avicenne*, 210n2. Not all instances of *maʿrifa* are necessarily in the Sufi sense, however. Even the Sufi Qušayrī declares that "*maʿrifa* in the scholars' language is *ʿilm*." For an argument against reading *maʿrifa* here as a technical Sufi term, see Rapoport, "Sufi Vocabulary, but Avicennan Philosophy," 149–156 (quote on 150).

46 *al-Išārāt*, IX.4, 356.14–357.8. Aristotle's description of man as a social animal in *Politics* (1252b–1253a) clearly informs Ibn Sīnā's account of the communal nature of humanity and the role of cities in the pursuit of human happiness; Jowett, Trans., *The Politics of Aristotle*, 2–5. This is precisely how Rāzī and Ṭūsī characterize man in their commentaries on this section. For the reasons given in this section, they say, "man is social by nature" (*al-insānu madanīyyun bi-l-ṭabʿi*); Rāzī, *Šarḥ*, 2:595.8; Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ*, 2:1036.2–3. Cüneyt Kaya has claimed that Ibn Sīnā does not address practical philosophy in the *Pointers*, seemingly overlooking this section; Kaya, "In the Shadow of 'Prophetic Legislation,'" 277. Brief as *Pointers* IX.4 may be, it succinctly presents what Ibn Sīnā expounds in much greater length in the final chapters of the Metaphysics of the *Cure*.

47 Emending the text to *fa-lam yakun* from *wa-lam yakun* as it appears in Rahman's edition. Rahman notes that, when read as *wa-lam yakun*, there is no clear response to *lammā*, and

individual man, if there were no one else in existence except for him alone, and except for what exists in nature, he would perish, or his life would [undergo] extreme hardship … Indeed, man needs more than what is [available] in nature, such as food and clothes that are the product of labor … Therefore, first of all man needs agriculture and likewise other crafts. A single individual is unable to produce all of those things that he needs by himself, but rather [is only able to do so] through partnership, with the result that this [person] makes bread for that [person], and that [person] weaves [textiles] for this [person].[48]

الطبيعة له وأمّا الإنسان الواحد فلو لم يكن في الوجود إلّا هو وحده وإلّا الأمور الموجودة في الطبيعة لهلك أو لساءت معيشته أشدّ سوء … بل الإنسان محتاج إلى أمور أزيد ممّا في الطبيعة مثل الغذاء المعمول واللباس المعمول … فلذلك يحتاج الإنسان أوّل شيء إلى الفلاحة وكذلك إلى صناعات أخرى لا يتمكّن الإنسان الواحد من تحصيل كلّ ما يحتاج إليه من ذلك بنفسه بل بالمشاركة حتّى يكون هذا يخبز لذاك وذاك ينسج لهذا

Metaphysics, *Cure*, *Salvation*

It is known that man is distinct from other animals in that he cannot live well if he were to isolate himself as a single individual responsible for managing his affairs without a partner who aids him in his necessities. It is [also known] that it is necessary that [one] man satisfy [the needs] of another of his kind, that other also satisfying his [needs] and his counterpart's. For example, this [person] would provide vegetables for that [person], and that [person] would provide bread for this [person]. And this [person] would sew for that [person], while the other would provide the needle, with the result that if they come together their [needs] would be satisfied. Because of this, they were obliged to come together in cities and societies … A certain [kind of] partnership is necessary, therefore, for

إنّه من المعلوم أنّ الإنسان يفارق سائر الحيوانات بأنّه لا يحسن معيشته لو انفرد وحده شخصاً واحداً يتولّى تدبير أمره من غير شريك يعاونه على ضروريّات حاجاته وأنّه لا بدّ من أن يكون الإنسان مكفياً بآخر من نوعه يكون ذلك الآخر أيضاً مكفياً به وبنظيره فيكون مثلاً هذا يبقل لذلك وذاك يخبز لهذا وهذا يحيط لآخر والآخر يتخذ الإبرة لهذا حتّى إذا اجتمعوا كان أمرهم مكفياً ولهذا ما اضطرّوا إلى عقد المدن والاجتماعات … فلا بدّ في وجود الإنسان وبقائه من مشاركته ولا تتمّ المشاركة إلّا بمعاملة … ولا بدّ في المعاملة من سُنّة وعدل

suggests that perhaps it should be read as *lam yakun*; *Avicenna's De Anima*, 202, app. crit. 2. Since the apodosis of *lammā* is often introduced by *fa-*, and since an undotted *fa-* can easily be mistaken for a *wa-*, emending the *wa-* to *fa-* is better than eliminating it.

48 V.1, 202.7–203.3.

man's existence and continuity. The partnership will not be complete without exchange … And in this exchange, there must be [norms sanctioned by] tradition and justice.[49]

For a system of exchange and barter to succeed, it needs to be a just system. Justice, Ibn Sīnā notes in the *Pointers* and the *Cure/Salvation*,[50] is preserved by religious law, which is imposed by a law-giver who is distinguished by signs that indicate that he is sent from God.[51] Inherent in this just system is the need for punishment and reward by God for the evil-doer and the good-doer, respectively. In order for this knowledge (*maʿrifa*) of the law-giver and the laws to endure, there must be a mechanism to ensure that people remember them. This mechanism is repetitive acts of worship. This reiterates the message that Ibn Sīnā delivers on the benefits of devotional practices in the Metaphysics of the *Cure* and *Salvation*.

Of course, it is necessary that the prophet must plan with great care for the permanence of what he has prescribed and legislated concerning matters of human welfare. There is no doubt that the foundation of this is the people persisting in their knowledge of the Creator and the afterlife and [their] terminating the cause of forgetting this with the passing of the generation that follows the Prophet. It is necessary to oblige the people with certain acts

فيجب لا محالة أن يكون النبي قد دبّر لبقاء ما يسنّه ويشرعه في أمور المصالح الإنسانيّة تدبيراً عظيماً ولا شكّ أنّ القاعدة في ذلك هي استمرار الناس على معرفتهم بالصانع والمعاد وحسم سبب وقوع النسيان فيه مع انقراض القرن الذي يلي النبي فيجب أن يكون على الناس أفعال وأعمال يسنّ تكرارها عليهم في مدد متقاربة حتّى يكون الذي

49 Trans. mod. from *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, X.2, 364.7–18; *al-Najāt*, 338.19–339.5. On this passage, and its relation to the Aristotelian notion that man is social by nature, see Galston, "Realism and Idealism in Avicenna's Political Philosophy," 574; Butterworth, "Medieval Islamic Philosophy and the Virtue of Ethics," 329. This notion also shows up in the spurious *Epistle on Wealth* (*Risāla fī l-arzāq*), as discussed in Hourani, "The Secret of Destiny," 37–38. On the epistle's spuriousness, see Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 495. On humanity's need for cities in order to survive, and cities as a part of divine providence, see Sebti, *Avicenne*, 167–181.

50 And in a comparable passage in the Metaphysics of the *Guidance*; *al-Hidāya*, III.5, 298.2–299.7; Italian trans. in Lizzini, "Metafisica," 417–418.

51 Ibn Sīnā has provided in these passages of the *Pointers, Cure*, and *Salvation*, a practical argument for the necessity of the prophet-legislator for the well-being of humanity. For an analysis of the epistemological and metaphysical necessity of the prophet-legislator, see Sebti, *Avicenne*, 183–200.

and works whose repetition in proximate intervals has been prescribed upon them so that [an act] whose appointed time passes is near to [the act] that will be performed [next] … Of course, it is necessary that these acts be connected to what reminds [the worshipper] of God and the afterlife; if not, then there is no benefit to them.[52]

ميقاته بطل مصاقباً للمنقضي منه … ويجب أن يكون هذه الأفعال مقرونة بما يذكّر بالله والمعاد لا محالة وإلّا فلا فائدةَ فيها

Given the perfection of their theoretical and practical intellects, the knowers are best positioned to recognize, preserve, and put their knowledge of this system to good use; therefore, they are the most likely to achieve great benefit in the next world.[53] Ibn Sīnā ends *Pointers* IX.4 with an oblique command to "reflect on philosophy, then on mercy and blessing, [and] you will notice a side [of something] whose marvels will render you breathlessly bedazzled. Then establish and abide!"[54] The purpose of the command to reflect on philosophy is so that the reader may not only determine the validity of the argument made in this section, but also to ensure that one can recognize and validate the signs of the law-giver and the laws that he brings. Having done so, one will naturally then reflect on God's mercy and blessing in giving humanity these just laws. The commands to "establish and abide," then, refer to establishing and holding fast to these laws.[55]

Continuing to differentiate between the knower and the non-knower (**IX.5**), Ibn Sīnā states,

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52 Trans. mod. from *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, X.3, 367.5–13; *al-Najāt*, 341.1–8.

53 On the fundamental role of the practical intellect in Ibn Sīnā's politics and ethics, and its function in safeguarding not only individual well-being, but that of the society, see Lizzini, "Vie active," 227–231.

54 *fa-nẓur ilā l-ḥikmati ṯumma l-raḥmati wa-l-niʿmati talḥaẓ janāban tabharuka ʿajāʾibuhu ṯumma aqim wa-staqim*; *al-Išārāt*, IX.4, 357.11–12. Before this concluding phrase, Ibn Sīnā declares that the benefit that is proper to the knowers will increase "insofar as they turn their faces toward it" (i.e., God) (*fī-mā hum muwallūna wujūhahum šaṭrahu*). Cruz Hernández mistranslates this as the benefit increasing "in relation to those who turn their faces away from the [Lord];" Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 66. The same error appears in Goichon's translation, once again suggesting that Cruz Hernández may have been translating Goichon as much as he was Ibn Sīnā; Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 489.

55 On the role of religious and ethical knowledge that is transmitted via a prophet, see Gutas, "Avicenna: The Metaphysics of the Rational Soul," 2014, 423. Ibn Sīnā's practical philosophy and its implications, as expressed here in IX.4 and also in Metaphysics X.2–5 of the *Cure*, are summarized in Eshots, "Ibn Sina, Abu ʿAli (980–1037)."

العارف يريد الحقّ الأوّل لا لشيء غيره ولا يؤثر شيئاً على عرفانه وتعبّدُه له فقط ولأنّه مستحقّ للعبادة ولأنّها نسبة شريفة إليه لا لرغبة أو رهبة وإن كانتا فيكون المرغوب فيه أو المرهوب عنه هو الداعي وفيه المطلوب ويكون الحقّ ليس الغاية بل الواسطة إلى شيء غيره هو الغاية وهو المطلوب دونه

The knower seeks the First Truth [for the First Truth alone], not for something else, and does not prefer anything over knowledge of It. His worship is to It alone, for It is worthy of worship, and because [worship] is a noble relation to It; not because of desire or fear. If it was [due to] desire or fear, then the object of desire or fear would be the motivation, and therein would be the goal. The Truth would not be the end, but the means to some other end, to the exclusion of [the Truth].[56]

It is imperative to recall here what Ibn Sīnā means when he refers to the knower's worship of God. The knower engages in worship to expand the rational soul's dominance over his faculties of Estimation and Imagination: first, so they do not oppose the intellect in its function; and secondly, so they attend to translating the brilliant illumination (i.e., knowledge [*ʿirfān*] from the First Truth) that the intellect receives.[57] Ibn Sīnā's use of *ʿirfān* may lead one to believe that he is referring to some kind of experiential or communal knowledge of God, but such an interpretation does not correspond with the explicitly physical and intellectual—not mystical—processes involved here.[58]

With this in mind, we can now turn to why Ibn Sīnā states that the knower worships the First Truth for Its sake alone, and not for anything else. He explains that this means that the knower does not seek the First Truth out of desire for reward or fear of punishment; if this were the case, then desire or fear would be the goal, while knowledge of the First Truth would merely be an intermediate step to this ultimate goal. This would be more akin to how non-knowers—for example, ascetics and worshippers—perceive the utility of engaging in acts of worship as something that one does to obtain a reward or avoid a punishment.

Ibn Sīnā continues discussing those who place the Truth in an intermediate position, stating that they are "worthy of mercy, in a way"[59] (**IX.6**). This

56 *al-Išārāt*, IX.5, 357.14–358.3.

57 Sc. IX.3.

58 For example, Christian Jambet suggests that in this section and in *Pointers* IX.6, Ibn Sīnā models the knower off certain Sufi teachings; Jambet, "Qu'est-ce qu'un sage?," 199.

59 *al-mustaḥillu tawsīṭa l-ḥaqqi marḥūmun min wajhin*; *al-Išārāt*, IX.6, 358.5. The reference is to one who puts the Truth in merely a medial position that leads to one's ultimate goal, rather than the Truth being that ultimate goal. Baffioni's translation obscures this point: "Who considers it possible [to remain in a state that is] medial with respect to the Truth;" Baffioni, *Storia della filosofia islamica*, 257.

is because, since such a person has not experienced the pleasure of knowing the First Truth, the only pleasures that he knows are lesser, imperfect pleasures (which leads to the widely held misconception with which Ibn Sīnā opens *Pointers* VIII). In fact, this lack of experience means he will not even seek out this greater pleasure.[60] This conforms to what Ibn Sīnā says when he first elaborates the concept of Taste and its relation to desire in VIII.8. With respect to the knower, he likens this person's state to that of a youth in relation to an older, wiser, and more experienced person. Youths, whose experience is limited to the pleasures of play, are astonished whenever they see a wise, serious older person turn away from those pleasures and seek pleasures that are available to adults.[61] Ibn Sīnā strikes a similar tone in the *Provenance and Destination*:

واعلم أنّه كما أنّ الصبيان لا يحسّون باللذّات والآلام التي تخصّ المدركين ويستهزؤون بهم وإنّما يستلذّون ما هو بالحقيقة غير لذيذ ويكرهه المدركون كذلك صبيان العقول وَهُم أهل الدنيا والبدنيّون عند مدركي العقول وهم الذين تخلّصوا عن المادّة

Know that just as the youth do not sense the pleasures and pains that are proper to the attainers [of true pleasure], deride those [who do], and take pleasure only in what is actually not pleasurable (which those who do attain [true pleasures] despise), so are the young of intellect (who are the people of this lower world and those attached to the body) in the eyes of the attaining intellects (who are those who have become freed from matter).[62]

60 "He has not Tasted the pleasure of joy in It such that he would seek to Taste it" (*fa-innahu lam yaṭʿam laḏḏata l-bahjati bi-hi fa-yastaṭʿimuhā*); *al-Išārāt*, IX.6, 385.5–6. Inati reads *yaṭʿam* ("taste") in the passive: "For he is not given the pleasure of having joy in the Truth so that he can seek this pleasure;" Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 84. The passive voice takes agency out of the hands of the knower in his quest for knowledge, which is precisely the opposite of what Ibn Sīnā says. The knower does not passively receive knowledge and the subsequent pleasure from above, but acquires them as a result of his rational soul's ability to subjugate the corporeal faculties and make contact with the supernal realm.

61 "Since they are ignorant of the good things that adults eagerly covet, and [since] their experience is limited to the pleasures of play, they become astonished whenever serious people turn away from those [lesser pleasures], detesting them and resorting to other things" (*lammā ġafalū ʿan ṭayyibātin yaḥriṣu ʿalay-hā l-bāliġūna wa-qtaṣarat bi-him l-mubāšaratu ʿalā ṭayyibāti l-laʿbi ṣārū yataʿajjabūna min ahli l-jiddi iḏā zwarrū ʿan-hā ʿā'ifīna la-hā ʿākifīna ʿalā ġayrihā*); *al-Išārāt*, IX.6, 358.8–10. Inati misreads "eagerly covet" (*yaḥriṣ*) as "guarded by" (perhaps thinking of *yaḥrus*?); Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 84.

62 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.14, 114.6–9; cf. Stroumsa, "True Felicity," 61. Ibn Sīnā says much the same in the Metaphysics of *Guidance*: "Like the youth who imagines that there is no

As we learn in the *Pointers*, the only individuals whose rational souls can act as if they have freed themselves from matter prior to actually separating from their bodies are the souls of the knowers. That Ibn Sīnā refers to such individuals as "attaining intellects" in the *Provenance and Destination* solidifies the central role of the intellect and rational knowledge in his conception of the "knower."

As for those who do not turn away from baser, corporeal pleasures (i.e., non-knowers), Ibn Sīnā states that their deficiency has hindered them from reaching the joy of Truth, for they satisfy themselves with whatever false pleasures are within reach; namely, the "pleasures of the belly and the penis."[63] This is a clear allusion to Ibn Sīnā's remonstrance in *Pointers* VIII.1 (and throughout his corpus) that true pleasure is far more exalted than base, corporeal pleasures. Non-knowers, however, abandon these pleasures only grudgingly, worshipping God only so that He satiate their desires in the afterlife.

Here, we see Ibn Sīnā continuing to develop a bifurcated definition of worship, which means one thing for knowers and something entirely different for non-knowers. For knowers, worship is about refining one's intellectual faculties in order to come closer to knowing the First Truth and experiencing the pleasure associated with acquiring this knowledge, be it in this worldly life or in the afterlife. Meanwhile, for non-knowers, worship entails routine physical activities that are done in hope of receiving a corporeal reward in this life and the next. This approach to worship is reminiscent of his overall perspective on the dissemination of knowledge: the methods and results of philosophical investigation should only be divulged to the intellectual elite, who are most capable of understanding them and putting them to good use; meanwhile, the masses—who would fall into utter confusion if exposed to philosophy—should be taught through a means they can comprehend, namely, allegory.

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pleasure other than the likes of the games with which he occupies himself. As for what pleasures adults prefer, this is, to him [the youth], a kind of insanity" (*ka-l-ṣabyi yaḥīlu la-hu anna lā laḏḏata illā fī naḥwi l-laʿbi llaḏī yaštaġilu bi-hi wa-ammā mā yuʾṭirūnahu l-bāliġūna mina l-laḏḏāti fa-huwa ʿinda-hu ḍarbun mina l-ḫabali*); *al-Hidāya*, III.6, 305.10–11.

63 *al-Išārāt*, IX.6, 359.2. The text reads, "There is no place for his eyes to rise [toward], in this life or the next, except to the pleasures of his belly and penis" (*fa-lā maṭmaḥa li-baṣarihi fī ūlāhu wa-uḫrāhu illā ilā laḏḏāti qabqabihi wa-ḍabḍabihi*). Inati, Goichon, and Cruz Hernández all misread this. Inati: "the pleasures of one's belly and memory;" Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 84. Goichon: "the pleasures of clinking and trinkets;" Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 490. Cruz Hernández: "boasting and showing off;" Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 68.

2 The "Stages" (*darajāt*) of the Human Intellect in Relation to Secondary Intelligibles

Before moving on to the first "stage" of the knower's movements (IX.7), it is necessary to summarize briefly Ibn Sīnā's conception of the varying relations of the human theoretical faculty to the intelligibles that are stored in the active intellect, as these relations—most especially the acquired intellect—are alluded to in the following several sections (IX.7–17).[64] The intellect has four relations to the intelligibles. The first relation, the material intellect (*al-ʿaql al-hayūlānī*), is shared by all humans at birth. It is when the intellect is merely predisposed to receive primary and secondary intelligibles, but has not yet done so. The oft-cited example that Ibn Sīnā provides is of a human's ability to write. An infant's theoretical faculty is in a relation of "absolute predisposition from which nothing will have entered into actuality, nor does there exist anything that will bring it out [into actuality]."[65] An infant, then, not only cannot write, but has not acquired any such know-how. It remains in a state of absolute potentiality as a writer. The second relation is the dispositional intellect (*al-ʿaql bi-l-malaka*). This relation is characterized by the intellect's having acquired—unintentionally, and unbeknownst to the recipient—primary intelligibles or axioms, such as the whole is bigger than the part, or two things that are equal to another are also equal to themselves.[66] To continue with Ibn Sīnā's example of the ability to write, the dispositional intellect would correspond with a youth who has "learned [to use] a pen and inkwell and to write the basic forms of the letters."[67] It is to the dispositional intellect that Ibn Sīnā ascribes

64 Ibn Sīnā also discusses these relations in *al-Išārāt*, III.10, 241–243; trans. in Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 186. On referring to these as relations—as opposed to stages, powers, levels, degrees, etc.—see Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 177–178. For a summary of how Ibn Sīnā's account of these relations developed over the course of his career, see Sebti, "L'Analogie de la lumière," 9–13.

65 [*fa-yuqālu quwwatun*] *li-l-istiʿdādi l-muṭlaqi llaḏī lā yakūnu ḫaraja min-hu bi-l-fiʿili šayʾun wa-lā ayḍan ḫaṣala mā bi-hi yaḥruju*; *Avicenna's De Anima*, I.5, 48.8–9; comparable, but not exact, passage in *al-Najāt*, 204.5; cf. Rahman's translation in *Avicenna's Psychology*, 33–35.

66 *Avicenna's De Anima*, I.5, 49.6–13; cf. *al-Najāt*, 204.18–24. In the *Notes*, Ibn Sīnā says much the same: "First principles occur to the human intellect without [an act of] acquisition, so it knows not from where and how they occur to it" (*al-awāʾilu taḥṣulu fī l-ʿaqli l-insāniyyi min ġayri ktisābin fa-lā yadrī min ayna taḥṣūlu fī-hi wa-kayfa taḥṣulu fī-hi*); *al-Taʿlīqāt*, III.17, 99.12–13. Gutas observes that Ibn Sīnā always provides mathematical propositions such as these as examples of the primary intelligibles; Gutas, "The Empiricism of Avicenna," 20.

67 *ka-quwwati l-ṣabīyi llaḏī taraʿraʿa wa-ʿarafa l-dawāta wa-l-qalama wa-basāʾiṭa l-ḥurūfi ʿalā l-kitābati*; *Avicenna's De Anima*, I.5, 48.12–13; *al-Najāt*, 204.7.

the ability known as *ḥads*, or "Guessing Correctly"[68] the middle terms of syllogisms. In describing the ability of *ḥads*, Ibn Sīnā says,

وهذا الاستعداد قد يشتدّ في بعض الناس حتّى لا يحتاج في أن يتّصل بالعقل الفعّال إلى كثير شيء وإلى تخريج وتعليم بل يكون شديد الاستعداد لذلك كأنّ الاستعداد الثاني الحاصل له بل كأنّه يعرف كلّ شيء من نفسه وهذه الدرجة أعلى درجات هذا الاستعداد ويجب أن تسمّى هذه الحالة من العقل الهيولانيّ عقلاً قدسيّاً وهي شيء من جنس العقل بالملكة إلّا أنّه رفيع جدّاً ليس ممّا يشترك فيه الناس كلّهم

This predisposition may be so strong in certain people that they do not need great effort, or training and instruction, in order to make contact with the active intellect; rather, the strength of their predisposition for this is as if they were in possession of the second predisposition [= *al-ʿaql bi-l-malaka*]. Indeed, it seems as if they know everything by themselves. This is the highest stage of this predisposition. This state of the material intellect should be called "sacred intellect," being of the genus of the dispositional intellect, but it is so lofty that is it not something shared by all people.[69]

This sagacity (*ṭaqāfa*), as Ibn Sīnā calls Guessing Correctly, varies among people. On the side of imperfection, there will be some who are absolutely devoid of *ḥads*. On the other side of the spectrum, it is possible for one to have no need for study (*taʿallum*) or discursive thought (*fikr*) in most circumstances. This latter describes prophets, to whom Ibn Sīnā attributes a "sacred faculty" (*quwwa qudsiyya*).[70] The knowledge acquired by Guessing Correctly is the same as that acquired by discursive thought (*fikr*). Both are based in logic, syllogistic in form, and acquired by the intellect. The difference lies in the speed and effort (Guessing Correctly is immediate or nearly so, discursive thought is not) and desire (Guessing Correctly does not follow a desire or purposeful quest, while discursive thought does).

The relation that follows the dispositional intellect is that of the actual intellect (*al-ʿaql bi-l-fiʿl*). When characterized by this relation, a person "can act whenever he desires without need for acquiring [anything]. Rather, it is suffi-

68 Often translated as "intuition." I follow Gutas in translating it as "Guessing Correctly;" *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, xii–xiii; see 179–201 for a detailed discussion of *ḥads*; see also his "Intuition and Thinking." On Rāzī's use of Ibn Sīnā's concept of Guessing Correctly, see Janos, "Intuition, Intellection, and Mystical Knowledge."

69 *Avicenna's De Anima*, V.6, 248.13–19; trans. slightly mod. from Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 182; cf. *al-Išārāt*, III.10–11, 241–243; trans. in Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 186–187.

70 *al-Išārāt*, III.12, 243.15–244.6.

cient for him only to intend [to act]."[71] In this case, the youth who had learned the basics of writing would now be a scribe who has perfected his craft but is not actually engaged in writing. Ibn Sīnā later elaborates that this relation is when the intellect "has obtained intelligible forms after the primary intelligibles [i.e., secondary intelligibles], except that it does not consider or resume [thinking about] them in actuality. Rather, it is as if it has them stored, and whenever it desires to consider these forms in actuality, it thinks them and it thinks that it has just thought them."[72] This, in turn, describes the fourth and final relation of the theoretical faculty to the intelligibles. This is when "the intelligible forms are present [in the human intellect], while it considers them in actuality. [The intellect] intellects them and intellects that it is intellecting them in actuality."[73] This relation is called the "acquired intellect" (*al-ʿaql al-mustafād*). To conclude the analogy of the writer, this would be when the scribe actively engages in writing.

It is important now to bear two things in mind. First, the human intellect is in the relation known as acquired intellect both when it is acquiring secondary intelligibles while in contact with the active intellect, and when the intellect is contemplating previously acquired secondary intelligibles that have subsequently been translated by the Cogitative faculty (*al-mutaḫayyila/al-mufakkira*) and stored in the Imagery (*ḫayāl*). Second, the relation known as acquired intellect is not permanent, but for most people will be ephemeral.

Returning to his discussion of the knowers (**IX.7**), Ibn Sīnā states,

The first stage of the knowers' movements is what *they* call 'volition.' [Volition] is what occurs to someone who tries to reflect [philo-

أوّل درجات حركات العارفين ما يسمّونه هم الإرادة وهو ما يعتري المستبصر باليقين البرهانيّ

71 *yakūn la-hu an yafʿala matā šāʾa bi-lā ḥājatin ilā l-iktisābi bal yakfīhi an yaqṣida faqaṭ*; *Avicenna's De Anima*, I.5, 48.14–15; *al-Najāt*, 204.9–10.

72 *wa-huwa an yakūna ḥaṣala fī-hā ayḍan al-ṣuwaru l-maʿqūlatu l-muktasabatu baʿda l-maʿqūlati l-awwaliyyati illā anna-hu laysa yuṭāliʿuhā wa-yarjaʿu ilay-hā bi-l-fiʿli bal kaʾanna-hā ʿinda-hu maḫzūnatun fa-matā šāʾa ṭālaʿa tilka l-ṣuwara bi-l-fiʿli fa-ʿaqalahā wa-ʿaqala anna-hu qad ʿaqalahā*; *Avicenna's De Anima*, I.5, 49.16–19; *al-Najāt*, 205.1–3. Hasse prefers to refer to this relation as "intellect *in effectu*" so as to avoid confusion with the following relation, the acquired intellect (*al-ʿaql al-mustafād*), which—unlike *al-ʿaql bi-l-fiʿl*—characterizes the intellect when it is actually thinking of an intelligible; Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 177. There is merit in insisting on this distinction, as Ibn Sīnā himself acknowledges that *al-ʿaql bi-l-fiʿl* "may be called 'potential intellect' in relation to what follows it" (*wa-in kāna yajūzu an yusammā ʿaqlan bi-l-quwwati bi-l-qiyāsi ilā mā baʿda-hu*), this being the acquired intellect; *Avicenna's De Anima*, I.5, 50.2.

73 *takūn al-ṣuwaru l-maʿqūlatu ḥāḍiratan fī-hi wa-huwa yuṭāliʿuhā bi-l-fiʿli fa-yaʿqiluhā wa-yaʿqilu anna-hu yaʿqiluhā bi-l-fiʿli*; *Avicenna's De Anima*, I.5, 50.3–4; *al-Najāt*, 205.6–7.

أو الساكنَ النفس إلى العقد الإيمانيّ من الرغبة في اعتلاق العروة الوثقى فيتحرّك سرّه إلى القدس لينال من رَوْح الاتّصال فما دامت درجته هذه فهو مريد

sophically] through demonstrative certainty, or to the person whose soul finds rest in the contract of faith, namely the desire to hold fast to the firmest bond.[74] His innermost self moves toward the holy [realm] in order to acquire something of the gladness of contact. So long as this remains his stage, he is a novice.[75]

First, that Ibn Sīnā emphasizes "they" when he speaks of "volition" (*irāda*) is significant in that it indicates that he is using a term found in another discipline; namely, Sufism.[76] He is borrowing that term, but also giving it the correct explanation. Next, it is worth highlighting the intellectual nature of this section.[77] This first stage of the knower's movements is not something that happens to just anyone, but to someone who tries to engage in philosophical reflection through acquiring certain (*yaqīn*) and demonstrative (*burhānī*) knowledge. In so doing, there is a corresponding willingness to direct his innermost self (*sirr*, meaning his rational soul) to the holy realm, where the celestial

74 *al-ʿurwā l-wuṯqā*. Cf. Qurʾān 2:256 and 31:22.

75 *al-Išārāt*, IX.7, 359.7–10. The word *rawḥ* (alternatively, *rūḥ*) signifies "experiencing the joy, or happiness, arising from certainty;" Lane and Lane-Poole, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 1968, 3:1178, 1180. Janssens, Inati, and Goichon all misread *rūḥ/rawḥ al-ittiṣāl*: "refreshment of the conjunction" (Janssens), "spirit of conjunction" (Inati), and "smoothness due to the junction" (Goichon); Janssens, "Philosophical Mysticism," 45; Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 85; Goichon, "Le sirr," 123; see Rapoport, "Sufi Vocabulary, but Avicennan Philosophy," 159n49.

76 The emphasis appears in the original in the form of the explicit pronoun after the verb: *awwalu darajāti l-ʿārfiīna mā yusammūnahu* ***hum*** *al-irādata*. Janssens has come to a similar conclusion regarding Ibn Sīnā's penchant to say *they* call instead of *we* call, claiming that when Ibn Sīnā uses such locutions, it is evidence that he is not using his preferred terminology; Janssens, "Philosophical Mysticism," 48. That the "they" refers to Sufis is clearly suggested in Ibn Sabʿīn's remark that what Ibn Sīnā says on theology in the *Pointers* derives from Sufi concepts; see chapter 1, note 8. Dagli, in his translation of this passage, omits *mā yusammūnahu* and *mā yaʿtarī l-mustabṣira bi-l-yaqīn awi l-sākina l-nafsi ilā l-ʿaqdi l-imāniyyi*, giving no indication that he has excised this. He also misreads the pronoun *hum* as *hamm*, and proposes—without justification—the alternative reading *himma*, leading to the translation, "the restlessness of desire." The exclusion of reference to philosophical reflection and demonstrative certainty, along with the misreading of "they" as "restlessness" results in a very inaccurate and misleading translation (which was accompanied by no discussion or explanation); Dagli, *Ibn Al-ʿArabi and Islamic Intellectual Culture*, 29.

77 Houben declares that "except for the special emphasis on the intellectual character of this asceticism, everything sounds very much like the preparatory stages of the ordinary ṣūfī-teaching;" "Avicenna and Mysticism," 1956, 219. Since we cannot exclude the intellectual aspect, it stands that this is not ordinary Sufi doctrine.

intellects reside. This is done in order to experience the joy of contact, by which he means the joy associated with the knowledge acquired by means of making contact with the active intellect. This first stage (*daraja*) may also happen to someone whose soul is at peace (*sākin al-nafs*),[78] which characterizes the state of a soul which has acquired intelligibles, can reacquire them with ease, and thus is secure in its knowledge of them, which brings it joy. Ibn Sīnā's notion of volition (*irāda*) is clearly intellectual and based in rational, not mystical, thought .[79]

Here, we see a summary description of the process that Ibn Sīnā discusses in great detail in the following sections. It begins with someone whose intellect is in the relation called the dispositional intellect (*al-ʿaql bi-l-malaka*) and who desires to enhance his knowledge. The process concludes when this person, while seeking to acquire demonstrative knowledge and making contact with the active intellect, enters the relation of acquired intellect (*al-ʿaql al-mustafād*). But, so long as this person is in the stage of "volition," he is merely a novice (= dispositional intellect). This is, quite clearly, Ibn Sīnā's standard procedure for obtaining the ultimate intellectual joy, albeit expressed in a somewhat non-standard manner.

Ibn Sīnā adds that the novice will need training (*riyāḍa*), which is directed toward three goals (**IX.8**[80]): 1) "to remove whatever is below the Truth from the path of choice;" 2) "to render the commanding soul[81] obedient to the soul-at-peace so that the powers of the Imagination and Estimation are drawn toward

78 Compare this term with *al-nafs al-muṭma'inna*, which Ibn Sīnā uses in *Pointers* X.4. It is an allusion to Qur'ān 89:27, "Soul at peace!" (*yā ayyatuhā l-nafsu l-muṭma'innatu*). One may also compare the term to the Muʿtazilī concept of *sukūn al-nafs* ("tranquility of the soul"); see Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, 63. My thanks to the anonymous reviewer for pointing out this connection.

79 For more on Ibn Sīnā's non-mystical use of volition, stations (*maqāmāt*), and stages (*darajāt*), see Rapoport, "Sufi Vocabulary, but Avicennan Philosophy," 156–161. For an account of volition (or will) and its relation to Ibn Sīnā's theory of action, see Ruffus and McGinnis, "Willful Understanding," esp. 174–185.

80 Janssens's article has greatly aided my understanding of this section, which is partially translated therein; see Janssens, "Philosophical Mysticism," 46–47. Michot also presents a valuable French translation; Michot, *Musique et danse selon Ibn Taymiyya*, 74n3. See also the translation and discussion with reference to Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's commentary in Noble, *Philosophising the Occult*, 160. Although Ibn Sīnā does not refer to training as a stage or station, Inati argues that training and volition form two preparatory steps that precede what she identifies as nine stages along the knower's path to knowledge; the nine stages are likewise not specifically labeled as such by Ibn Sīnā; Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 36.

81 Like the "soul-at-peace" (*al-nafs al-muṭma'inna*), the term "commanding soul" (*al-nafs al-ammāra*) is also an allusion to the Qur'ān, in this case Q 12:35.

notions that correspond to sacred matters and turned away from notions that correspond to lowly matters;" and 3) "to render the innermost self [*sirr*, i.e., the rational soul] sensitive to attention."[82] The first goal, he says, can be achieved through what he calls "real asceticism," by which we should understand to mean the profound, intellectual asceticism that is practiced by the knowers in order to avoid whatever distracts the rational soul from the Truth, as opposed to the superficial, transactional asceticism of the non-knowers.

As Janssens observes, the second goal is to submit the faculties of the animal soul to the rational soul.[83] This is achieved by worship, for which we must again bear in mind Ibn Sīnā's differentiation between knowers and non-knowers; the definition and goals for knowers are intellectual in nature, while those for the non-knowers are not. In addition to this, we must note the equally intellectual nature of the second goal of training, as worship must be combined with discursive thought (*fikr*).[84] The need for training to prepare the Imagination and Estimation for "notions that correspond to sacred matters" are familiar in terms of both language and content from *Pointers* IX.3. The "sacred matters" should be understood as the intelligibles that the rational soul (in the relation called the acquired intellect) will acquire while making contact with the active intellect; the "lowly matters" are the objects of the Imagination and Estimation, which are based in the sensible, material world. In addition to discursive thought, melodies and admonishing words delivered in a melodious voice can facilitate the realization of the second goal.[85]

The third goal is aided by subtle discursive thought (*al-fikr al-laṭīf*) and chaste love (*al-ʿišq al-ʿafīf*). He points out that these are elevated qualities of the beloved (*maʿšūq*)—the Truth—and are the object of the rational soul's desire; they are not base qualities that appeal to the lower, appetitive faculty.[86] It is abundantly clear that Ibn Sīnā is not using the term *riyāḍa* in the sense of "spir-

82 *tanḥiyatu mā dūna l-ḥaqqi ʿan mustanni l-iṯāri … taṭwīʿu l-nafsi l-ammārati li-l-nafsi l-muṭmaʾinnati li-tanjaḍiba quwā l-taḫayyuli wa-l-wahmi ilā l-tawahummāti l-munāsibati li-l-amri l-qudsiyyi munṣarifatan ʿani l-tawahhumāti l-munāsibati li-l-amri l-suflī … talṭīfu l-sirri li-l-tanabbuhi*; *al-Išārāt*, IX.8, 359.13–360.4.

83 Janssens, "Philosophical Mysticism," 46. Elsewhere, Janssens observes a similarity between Ibn Sīnā's and Ġazālī's insistence that the soul-at-peace should dominate the commanding soul; "Al-Ghazālī between Philosophy (*Falsafa*) and Sufism (*Taṣawwuf*)," 620.

84 I follow Janssens in translating *fikr* here as "discursive thought;" Janssens, "Philosophical Mysticism," 47.

85 Ibn Sīnā briefly mentions the therapeutic value of music for mitigating pain in the *Canon*; *al-Qānūn fī l-ṭibb*, 1:328.4; Gruner, *A Treatise on the Canon of Medicine of Avicenna*, §1084, 529.

86 As such, the reference to chaste love should not be mistaken with romantic love.

itual" exercise, training, or discipline. It is most certainly corporeal (e.g., Imagination and Estimation) and intellectual in nature.[87] Here, Ibn Sīnā gives his reader another clue that he is appropriating common terminology and assigning it a scientific meaning that befits his epistemology and psychology.[88]

Ibn Sīnā states that when volition and training bring an aspiring knower to a certain limit, this person will experience fleeting opportunities (*ḫulāsāt*) in which he will be exposed to the light of the Truth, which will be like flashes of lightning shining upon him (**IX.9**).[89] During these brief moments, the intellect

87 Since, in the study of Arabic and Islamic philosophy, the word *rūḥ* is commonly translated as "spirit," spiritual training would seem to suggest training of the *rūḥ*. That is obviously not the case here. Words derived from *rūḥ* (e.g., *rūḥānī*) may also be used to refer to the supernal realm, as Ibn Sīnā himself does. Insofar for as *riyāḍa* prepares the intellect for contact with the supernal realm, it may be considered spiritual; this, however, may not always be immediately clear. In a more generic sense, in modern English "spirit(ual)" is often used to indicate an immaterial soul or, even more generically, something vaguely religious. There is much room for confusion, then, in qualifying Ibn Sīnā's use of *riyāḍa* as "spiritual." Given that this training is principally directed at the Estimation and Imagination, qualifying *riyāḍa* as "training of the soul" would be acceptable. Noble refers to *riyāḍa* as "spiritual discipline" in his excellent discussion of Rāzī's theorization of uncommon ("occult") powers; *Philosophising the Occult*, 159–160 and note 47. Inati translates this as "spiritual exercise;" *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 35 and 85. Goichon understands it to mean "asceticism and spiritual exercise." She states that the two meanings are included in the term *riyāḍa*, which means "exercise in different orders of activity, both corporeal and spiritual;" *Directives et remarques*, 491 and note 5. For more on Ibn Sīnā's use of *riyāḍa*, see Rapoport, "Sufi Vocabulary, but Avicennan Philosophy," 161–168.

88 One may profitably compare Ibn Sīnā's appropriation of *riyāḍa* to Rāzī's, as evaluated by Janos: "al-Rāzī is not simply borrowing this idea [i.e., *riyāḍāt*] from the Sufis, but adapting it for his own purposes and integrating it in his philosophical program … The fundamental connection between these exercises and the betterment of the rational soul is vindicated by the intellectualist framework in which these practices are discussed: their primary aim is to prepare the intellect (*al-ʿaql*) for the intuitive acquisition of the intelligibles and sciences by mitigating or even obliterating the lower aspirations of the soul and its attachment to the corporeal world. The elements in al-Rāzī's works that can putatively be traced to Sufism therefore seem to have assumed a particular form and function in his philosophical system;" Janos, "Intuition, Intellection, and Mystical Knowledge," 212.

89 This is illustrated in the climactic moment of the allegory *Salāmān and Absāl*. The tale is of two half-brothers who are the eponyms of the story. The younger brother, Absāl, is handsome, smart, and brave. He attracts the attention of Salāmān's wife, who arranges a wedding between Absāl and her sister. On the wedding night, Salāmān's wife takes her sister's place in bed with Absāl, unbeknownst to him. As she attempts to seduce him, "in that moment the sky became dark with clouds, and there flashed a bolt of lightning whose light illuminated her face" (*wa-qad taġayyama l-samāʾu fī l-waqti bi-ġaymin muẓlimin fa-lāḥa fī-hi barqun abṣara bi-ḍawʾihi wajhahā*) revealing her as an imposter; Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ*, 2:1026.4. The metaphor of fleeting moments of illumination is another Qurʾānic allusion: "Their

is in the relation called the acquired intellect. This stage, he says, is what "they" call "moments" (sg. *waqt*).[90]

ثمّ إنّه إذا بلغت به الإرادة والرياضة حدّاً ما عنّت له خلساتٌ من إطّلاع نور الحقّ عليه لذيذةٌ كأنّها بروق تومض إليه ثمّ تخمد عنه وهي المسمّى عندهم أوقاتاً وكلّ وقت يكتنفه وجدانِ وجد إليه ووجد عليه

Furthermore, whenever volition and [intellectual] training bring him [the knower] to a certain limit, there will appear to him pleasurable, *fleeting opportunities* of beholding the light of the Truth upon him, as if they are flashes of lightning that shine upon him and then subside from him. This is what they call "moments." Each moment is encompassed by two experiences: one toward it [contact with the active intellect], and one away from it.[91]

Goichon, Inati, and Cruz Hernández all translate *wajdāni* as "two ecstasies," misunderstanding the tenor of the passage. Only the moment of contact with the supernal realm can properly be described as ecstatic—a moment of overwhelming joy and pleasure. What comes immediately before and after that moment cannot be ecstasy, otherwise there would be nothing to distinguish being in contact with the supernal realm from not being in contact with it. These two other moments, as Ṭūsī rightly observes, are moments of sadness and regret.[92]

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example is like the example of those who kindled fire. When it lit what was around them, God removed their light and left them in shadows unseeing, deaf, dumb, blind—so they will not return. Or it is like a cloudburst out of Heaven in which is darkness, and thunder, and lightning—they put their fingers in their ears against the thunderclaps, fearful of death; and God encompasses the unbelievers; the lightning nearly snatches away their sight. Whenever it gives them light, they walk in it. And when the darkness is over them, they halt. Had God willed, He would have taken away their hearing and their sight" (Q 2:17–20). My thanks to Shawkat Toorawa for providing the reference.

90 On how Ibn Sīnā's use of "moment" differs from its use in Sufi discourse, see Rapoport, "Sufi Vocabulary, but Avicennan Philosophy," 166–168.

91 *al-Išārāt*, IX.9, 360.13–15. Once again, by referring to "they," Ibn Sīnā acknowledges that the term he is using is also found in another discipline (again, Sufism).

92 Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 493; Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 86; Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 70. Ṭūsī, although not always the most trustworthy interpreter in his commentary, gets it right: "The two experiences that encompass the moment are not equal. The first one is sadness from waiting for so long for the [moment of] ecstasy, while the second is regret over its passing" (*wa-l-wajdāni llaḍāni yaktanifāni l-waqta lā yatasāwayāni li-anna l-awwala ḥuznun ʿalā istibṭāʾi l-wajdi wa-l-āḫaru asafun ʿalā fawātihi*); Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ*, 2:1061.2–3.

When speaking of contact with the supernal realm—whether it be the theoretical intellect making contact with the active intellect, or the practical intellect making contact with the celestial souls—Ibn Sīnā often resorts to language expressing how the rational soul takes advantage of short-lived opportunities to make such contact, at times employing the metaphor of lightning.

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These notions [attainments of the supernal realm] come about for reasons which arise in the [rational] soul for the most part *furtively*; they are like *stolen intimations* which do not stay long enough to be remembered.[93]

وهذه الخواطر تكون لأسباب تعنّ للنفس مسارقة في أكثر الأمر وتكون كالتلويحات المستلبة التي لا تتقرّر فتذكر

Pointers, X.23

In their [the Imagery and senses] confusion [the rational soul] takes advantage of the opportunity for the aforementioned *stealth* ... When the Estimation's agency in that search is strong, it does not take long for that contact to occur. At times, the *fleeting glance* of the Unseen is a kind of strong opinion.[94]

وفي حيرتهما اهتبال فرصة الخلسة المذكورة ... وإذا اشتدّ توكّل الوهم بذلك الطلب لم يلبث أن يعرض ذلك الاتّصال فتارةً يكون لمحان الغيب من ظنّ قويّ

Commentary on Book Lambda

Despite the weakness of our [ability to] conceptualize strong intelligibles and our immersion in [our] corporeal nature, we can arrive in a *furtive manner* to the point that contact with the First Truth becomes present to us. It is like a strange happiness in a very short period of time. It possesses this state etern-

إنّا نحن مع ضعف تصوّرنا للمعقولات القويّة وانغماسنا في الطبيعة البدنيّة قد نتوصّل على سبيل الاختلاس فيظهر لنا اتّصال بالحقّ الأوّل فيكون كسعادة عجيبة في زمان قليل جدّاً وهذه الحال له أبداً وهو لنا غير ممكن لأنّا بدنيّون ولا

93 *Avicenna's De Anima*, IV.2, 174.7–8; trans. from Gutas, "Imagination," 2014, 350; emphasis added. It is worth noting that while the language here is similar, the context is somewhat different, as the example in the *Cure* occurs in a section on veridical dreaming, in which case the rational soul's theoretical intellect is not seeking to track down intelligibles, but rather the practical intellect is making contact with the celestial souls. This is distinct from the purposeful acquisition of knowledge being discussed in this section of the *Pointers*.

94 *al-Išārāt*, X.23, 385.8–13.

ally, whereas that is impossible for us, since we are corporeal and unable to be on the lookout for this divine *lightning* but *suddenly* and *furtively*.[95]

يمكننا أن نشيم تلك البارقة الإلهيّة إلّا خطفةً وخلسةً

At this point, it should be increasingly clear that, despite Ibn Sīnā's periodic use of terminology that also appears in Sufi discourses (e.g., *waqt*), the concepts that he is elaborating in these chapters of the *Pointers*, and the language that he employs in doing so, are equivalent to what appears in his other works. He has appropriated Sufi terminology and naturalized it into his scientific system.

Ibn Sīnā adds that the knower can become so absorbed in his contact with the active intellect that it occurs to him even when he is not actively engaged in intellectual training (**IX.10**). As such, he nearly sees the Truth in everything around him, but remains partly veiled from it. In other words, he begins to react automatically to the stimuli around him, making contact with the active intellect and deducing the middle terms of syllogisms without having to try. Yet, he is able to remember only some of what he receives from the active intellect. Ibn Sīnā continues in this vein, saying that when the knower's veil is lifted from him (cf. IX.1), he will cease to be calm at first (**IX.11**). However, as his training continues, he will no longer be agitated by this, and he will be guided to "dress himself" (*talbīs*) in his veil, meaning to conceal his experience of momentary glimpses of the Truth.[96]

Developing the lightning metaphor, Ibn Sīnā notes that as the knower becomes more perfect through training, this will lead him "to a place in which his moment is upended into tranquility, wherein that which has been wrested away becomes familiar, and the flash of light becomes a clear flame. And there occurs to him a stable, direct knowledge as if it were continuous companionship, and with it he takes pleasure in its joy" (**IX.12**).[97] In this pointer, Ibn Sīnā

95 Geoffroy et al., *Commentaire*, 59.151–154 (with French trans.), emphasis added; cf. English trans. in Janssens, "Philosophical Mysticism," 41.

96 Inati speculates that the knower conceals his experience from those around him because he would not be able to communicate his experience to others who have not shared it. While this is correct (in *Pointers* IX.15, Ibn Sīnā notes that the knower is surrounded by ignoramuses), she errs in locating the inability to communicate this experience in its being "spiritual" in nature, and hence inherently incommunicable. It is, as we are seeing, a profoundly intellectual experience. Ibn Sīnā returns to the seeming incommunicability of parts of the experience in *Pointers* IX.20.

97 *yanqalibu waqtuhu sakīnatan fa-yaṣīru l-maḥṭūfu ma'lūfan wa-l-wamīḍu šihāban bayyinan wa-taḥṣulu la-hu muʿārafatun mustaqirratun ka-anna-hā ṣuḥbatun mustamirratun wa-yastamtiʿu fī-hā bi-bahjatihi*; *al-Išārāt*, IX.12, 361.11–362.1. What I read as "his moment

alludes to the increasing ease with which the knower remembers what he has already learned. Since intelligibles are immaterial and cannot be stored in any corporeal organ (e.g., the brain or heart), they are stored in the active intellect (which is so called because it is always thinking all of the intelligibles).[98] Therefore, remembering intelligible knowledge is an act of reconnecting with the active intellect and reacquiring a given intelligible. Given that one has already succeeded in doing this, further contact with the active intellect in this regard becomes easier and easier, as if it were "a stable … continuous companionship." This is akin—but not equivalent—to the perfect and enduring contact that the rational soul can make with the active intellect only after it has separated from its body, when this continuous contact will result in enduring pleasure.[99]

Ibn Sīnā continues to describe the knower as he strengthens his ability to make contact with the active intellect (**IX.13**).

ولعلّه إلى هذا الحدّ يظهر عليه ما به فإذا تغلغل في هذه المعارفة قلّ ظهوره عليه فكان وهو غائب حاضراً وهو ظاعن مقيماً

Perhaps up to this point [the state] he is in is clearly to be seen on him. But when he delves further into this direct knowledge, his outward appearance lessens. He is absent while present, departing while stationary.[100]

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is upended into tranquility," Radtke translates as "moments become an irreversible God-inspired tranquility;" Radtke, "How Can Man Reach the Mystical Union?," 166. The text does not support characterizing this as "God-inspired." While Ibn Sīnā does liken this to a "continuous companionship" (*ka-anna-hu ṣuḥbatun mustamirratun*), calling this "irreversible" does not fit with what Ibn Sīnā says about intellectual perfection in the *Pointers* and elsewhere.

98 On the active intellect being the storage place of the intelligibles, and the result of the human rational soul making contact with it, Ibn Sīnā states: "The substance in which intelligibles are impressed … is neither corporeal nor capable of division … because intelligibles cannot be impressed in a body. What remains here is that there is something external to our substance in which the intelligible forms exist essentially, since it is an intellectual substance in actuality. Whenever there is some sort of contact between our souls and it, intelligible forms are impressed from it in [our souls]" (*al-jawharu l-murtasimu bi-l-maʿqūlāti … ġayru jusmāniyyin wa-la munqasimin … li-anna l-maʿqūlāti la tartasimu fī jismin fa-baqiya anna hāhuna šayʾan ḫārijan ʿan jawharinā fī-hi l-ṣuwaru l-maʿqūlatu bi-l-ḏāti iḏ huwa jawharun ʿaqliyyun bi-l-fiʿli iḏā waqaʿa bayna nufūsinā wa-bayna-hu ittiṣālum mā rtasama min-hu fī-hā l-ṣuwaru l-ʿaqliyyatu*); *al-Išārāt*, III.13, 245.10–246.2; reference found in Gutas, "Intuition and Thinking," 35n27.

99 "If [the intellect] is liberated from the body and its accidents, it is then possible for it to make perfect contact with the active intellect and there encounter intellectual beauty and eternal pleasure" (*fa-in ḫalaṣa ʿani l-badani wa-ʿawāriḍi l-badani fa-ḥīna'iḏin yajūzu an yattaṣila bi-l-ʿaqli l-faʿʿāli tamāma l-ittiṣāli wa-yalqā hunāka l-jamāla l-ʿaqliyya wa-l-laḏḏata l-sarmadiyyata*); *Avicenna's De Anima*, V.6, 248.6–7.

100 *al-Išārāt*, IX.13, 362.3–4.

In other words, the knower is becoming more adept at "dressing himself" (*talbīs*) and concealing his inner state, be it a state of joy resulting from contact with the active intellect, or sadness and regret on account of that contact being interrupted.

This direct knowledge will become easy for the knower only sometimes (**IX.14**). It will gradually become easier for him until he is capable of experiencing it whenever he desires. In other words, he will be able to transition from the relation of actual intellect to acquired intellect with increasing ease. At this stage, the knower's contact with the active intellect depends neither on wish or desire, nor effort or intention (**IX.15**). Rather,

كلّما لاحظ شيئاً لاحظ غيره وإن لم تكن ملاحظته للاعتبار فيسنح له تعريج عن عالم الزور إلى عالم الحقّ مستقرّ به ويحتفّ حوله الغافلون

Whenever he notices something, he notices something else, even if his noticing was not deliberate, at which point it is accorded to him to rise away from the realm of falsehood to the realm of truth, in which he abides, while the heedless surround him.[101]

It is worth reiterating that by the realms of falsehood and truth Ibn Sīnā means the sublunar word of material, sensible objects and the supernal realm of immaterial intelligibles, respectively. Sensible objects and the corporeal senses that perceive them are all susceptible to corruption and therefore falsity, while immaterial intelligibles and the immaterial intellect are not, meaning they always represent the truth. The "rising away from the realm of falsehood" is the intellect's turning its attention away from its body and the sublunar realm, upward toward the intelligibles in the supernal realm.

Ibn Sīnā then introduces his metaphor of the perfected soul (*sirr*) as being "a polished mirror by which it faces toward the Truth"[102] (**IX.16**). This occurs after the knower has transitioned from intellectual training to acquisition (*al-nayl*)

101 IX.15, 362.9–11. Part of the text of this pointer reads *bal kulla-mā lāḥaẓa šay'an lāḥaẓa ġayrahu wa-in lam takun mulāḥaẓatuhu li-l-i'tibāri fa-yasnaḥu la-hu ta'rījun 'an 'ālami l-zūr ilā 'ālami l-ḥaqqi mustaqirrun bi-hi*. Goichon misreads the concessive *wa-in* as conditional, making the knower's rising away from the falsehood to truth conditional on the first observation not being deliberate. Certainly, this is not what Ibn Sīnā intended. Cruz Hernández makes the same error; Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 495; Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 72.

102 [*ṣāra sirruhu*] *mir'ātan majluwwatan muḥāḍiyan bi-hā šaṭra l-ḥaqqi*; *al-Išārāt*, IX.16, 362.13. Radtke identifies *sirr* as "another Ṣūfī term," with no other comment or explanation, which it certainly requires; Radtke, "How Can Man Reach the Mystical Union?," 167. On the metaphor of the rational soul as polished mirror, see Gutas, "Avicenna: The Metaphysics of the Rational Soul," 2014, 424.

of secondary intelligibles. Ibn Sīnā marshals this very same metaphor in his *On the Rational Soul*, in which he states,

The happiness [of the rational soul] comes about when its substance is rendered perfect, and this is accomplished when it is purified through knowledge of God ... Its purification through knowledge of God [consists of] its obtaining a disposition of its own, by means of which it is ready to call all the intelligibles to presence whenever it wishes without needing to acquire [them], and thus to have all the intelligibles present in it in actuality, or in a potentiality that is as close to actuality as possible. The soul then becomes like a polished mirror upon which are imprinted the forms of things as they are in themselves without any distortion. Whenever it stands face to face with them having been purified through knowledge, there ensues [an automatic] practicing of the theoretical philosophical sciences.[103]

وسعادته بتكميل جوهره وذلك بتزكيته بالعلم بالله ... وأمّا تزكيته بالعلم بالله فتحصيل ملكة له بها يتهيّأ لإحضار المعقولات كلّها متى شاء من غير افتقار إلى اكتساب فتكون المعقولات كلّها حاصلة له بالفعل أو بالقوّة القريبة غاية القرب من الفعل فتصير النفس كمرآة صقيلة تنطبع فيها صور الأشياء كما هي عليها من غير اعوجاج ومهما قوبلت بها بالتزكية العلميّة تحصل ممارسة العلوم الحكميّة النظريّة

As we saw in the prior chapter, in Ibn Sīnā's earlier works, he often referred to the soul's perfection as its becoming an "intellectual universe" (*ʿālam ʿaqlī*). In such later works as the *Pointers* and *On the Rational Soul*, he seems to have preferred likening the perfected soul to a polished mirror. At this stage—which corresponds to the acquired and actual intellect[104]—"the highest pleasures flow copiously to him"[105] and he receives traces of the Truth (i.e., secondary intelligibles from the active intellect). Additionally (**IX.17**), the knower "withdraws from his self, and notices the majesty of sanctity only," yet another metaphor for the supernal realm, home to the active intellect and celestial souls. To the extent that he notices his self, it is only insofar as he notices his soul noticing sanctity.[106] This, according to Ibn Sīnā, is real arrival (*yaḥuqqu l-wuṣūlu*).

103 *Risāla fī l-Kalām ʿalā l-nafs al-nāṭiqa*, in *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, 196.15–21; trans. mod. from Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 71.

104 Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 71n9.

105 *wa-darrat ʿalay-hi l-laḏḏātu l-ʿulā*; *al-Išārāt*, IX.16, 363.1.

106 *ṯumma inna-hu la-yaġību ʿan nafsihi fa-yalḥaẓu janāba l-qudsi faqaṭ*; IX.17, 363.4. Compare

As I have argued elsewhere, Ibn Sīnā uses arrival (or achievement, *wuṣūl*) to signify perfection.[107] It is inaccurate to suggest that he uses the term to mean union, and then point to this section as evidence that Ibn Sīnā experimented with mysticism, or that the path of Ibn Sīnā's knower ends in "total abandonment of oneself which leads to total absorption in the Truth," as Inati does.[108] In a similar vein, Lobel sees Ibn Sīnā's notion of arrival as the Sufi merging with the Truth, which she describes as a "a unitive absorption in one Truth that is God."[109] Goichon, quoting Ṭūsī, indicates that the knower's path "ends 'in the obliteration and annihilation in the unity [of God].'"[110] While such conclusions do reflect Ṭūsī's analysis of this section, they are not supported by the text. Nor does the evidence support claims that Ibn Sīnā's knower loses consciousness of himself, as Cruz Hernández and Gómez Nogales assert.[111] The knower does not lose awareness of himself as distinct, as Rist characterizes Plotinian mysticism.[112] In fact, Ibn Sīnā continues to discuss the knower's ability to pay attention to "both sides" (IX.22): the lower realm of the body and the supernal realm of the celestial souls and intellects.

3 Knowledge (*ʿirfān*) and the Highest Stages

Having concluded discussing the relation of the intellect to the intelligibles in the preceding sections, in what follows Ibn Sīnā recapitulates what he has already presented. He reiterates that turning toward whatever is below the knower is a distraction (**IX.18**). Similarly, giving consideration to whatever obeys the rational soul—the corporeal faculties and their desires—is a weakness.[113] He adds that to flaunt the ornamentation of one's self—even if it is the truth—amounts to haughtiness. To be liberated is to turn toward the Truth, without flaunting it or being overly proud of it.

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this with Plotinus, for whom this kind of awareness would imply a weakening of the mystical experience; Rist, "Back to the Mysticism of Plotinus," 195.

107 Rapoport, "Sufi Vocabulary, but Avicennan Philosophy," 176–181. This is the same conclusion reached by Janssens, "Philosophical Mysticism," 49.

108 Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 38.

109 Lobel, *Between Mysticism and Philosophy*, 40, 44.

110 Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 469n1; Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ*, 2:1069.8.

111 Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 73; Gómez Nogales, "El misticismo persa de Avicena," 81.

112 Rist, "Back to the Mysticism of Plotinus," 187.

113 "Turning toward what should be shunned is a distraction, while giving consideration to the obedient part of the soul is a weakness" (*al-iltifātu ilā mā tunuzziha ʿan-hu šaġlun wa-*

Ibn Sīnā then returns to a topic that he broached earlier in the eighth and ninth chapters, namely what knowledge consists of and what the knower's aims in acquiring knowledge are (**IX.19**). Only this time, he employs a little more rhetorical flair.

العرفان مبتدئ من تفريق ونفض وترك ورفض ممعنٌ في جمع هو جمع صفات الحقّ للذات المريدة بالصدق منتهٍ إلى الواحد ثمّ وقوف

Knowledge begins with separation and dissociation, then rejection and abandonment. It is an assiduous devotion to gathering—a gathering of the attributes of the Truth in the being that is seeking truth. It ends with the One, then halts.[114]

In other words, intellectual knowledge begins with the rational soul separating itself from and rejecting its body, such that the body becomes little more than a *jilbāb* for the soul (cf. IX.1).[115] This is because the body distracts the soul from its purpose, which is to gather the attributes of Truth. Knowledge concludes with the soul's arrival at the Truth, or the representation of all of reality in the human rational soul (cf. VIII.9).

This "arrival" (*wuṣūl*) is limited to those who pursue knowledge of the Truth for its sake alone, and not for some other purpose (cf. IX.2–3). Whoever chooses the pursuit of knowledge just for the sake of knowledge is in fact professing belief in knowledge; in other words, he is seeking knowledge for its own sake, instead of for the sake of knowing the Truth (**IX.20**). This is a challenging passage whose translation and interpretation are often full of errors, so it is worth presenting in full.

من آثر العرفان للعرفان فقد قال بالثاني ومن وجد العرفان كأنّه لا يجده بل يجد المعروف به فقد خاض لجّة الوصول وهناك درجات ليست

Whoever prefers knowledge for the sake of knowledge asserts his belief in the second. Whoever finds knowledge as if he has not found it, but rather finds what is known

l-iʿtidādu bi-mā huwa ṭawʿun mina l-nafsi ʿajzun); *al-Išārāt*, IX.18, 363.7. The verb *tunuzziha* could also be read as active, "what the knower has removed himself from." Inati, who reads it as active, understands it as "transcends," with "the Truth" as the implicit subject; Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 88.

114 *al-Išārāt*, IX.19, 363.11–12. Goichon translates *ʿirfān* as "mystical knowledge," as does Cruz Hernández; Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 497; Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 74. Similarly, Taghi translates it as "mysticism;" Taghi, *Two Wings*, 200.

115 Alternatively, the separation and dissociation could be seen as the intellect's separating and dissociating forms from matter.

أقلّ من درجات ما قبله آثرنا الاختصار فإنّها لا يُفْهِمها الحديث ولا تشرحها العبارة ولا يكشف المقال عنها غير الخيال ومن أحبّ أن يتعرّفها فليتدرّج إلى أن يصير من أهل المشاهدة ليس المشافهة ومن الواصلين إلى العين دون السامعين للأثر

through it, plunges into the depth of arrival. Here there are stages [before the knower] which are not fewer than the stages behind him. We have preferred to exclude them, since speech will not cause them to be understood, nor can expression explain them, nor can statements uncover them, except the [faculty of the] Imagery. Whoever desires to become familiar with them must proceed gradually until he becomes one of the people of direct Experience, not of speaking; and [one of the people] who have arrived to the thing, itself, not those who hear the trace.[116]

The first error commonly committed in interpreting this passage is to uncritically translate *ʿirfān* as "gnosis" or "mystical knowledge."[117] There is no support for this, other than a familiar association of *ʿirfān* with mystical knowledge in other disciplines. As we have seen, when Ibn Sīnā borrows terms from other disciplines, he does not do so uncritically, but molds them to fit his philosophical system. When Ibn Sīnā uses terms like *ʿirfān* and *maʿrifa* in *Pointers* VII–X, he is not doing so to signify some sort of gnosis or mystical, experiential knowledge (e.g., Sebti's *saisie fruitive*, Elamrani-Jamal's *connaissance savoureuse*); rather, he is using them synonymously with *ʿilm* in the sense of knowledge that is rational both in its structure and its means of acquisition.[118]

116 *al-Išārāt*, IX.20, 364.2–8. On Ibn Sīnā's use of *iḫtiṣār* to mean "exclusion" instead of "brevity," see Gutas, "Intellect without Limits," 16, wherein he translates much of this pointer. The faculty that Ibn Sīnā mentions here is the Imagery (*ḫayāl*), not the Imagination (*taḫayyul*), as Inati, Goichon, and Cruz Hernández translate it; Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 89; Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 498; Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 75. Of course, the Imagery stores images for use by the Imagination. Aaron Hughes adds a reference to the intellect in his translation ("the intellect cannot uncover it, only the imagination") without indicating that this does not appear in the Arabic; Hughes, *The Texture of the Divine*, 95. Elamrani-Jamal interprets *mušāhada* not as intellectual Experience but as contemplation. Like Inati, he asserts that the end of the knower's journey results in the annihilation of the individual in contemplation of God; Elamrani-Jamal, "Vision contemplative," 146. Elkaisy-Friemuth arrives at the same conclusion; Elkaisy-Friemuth, *God and Humans in Islamic Thought*, 113.

117 See, e.g., Goodman, *Avicenna*, 182n89; Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 498; Sebti, "La notion de *mušāhada*," 166; Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 74.

118 *Connaissance savoureuse* is Elamrani-Jamal's translation of *al-maʿrifa al-ḏawqiyya*, which he claims is one of the two forms of knowledge that the knower acquires upon his arrival

The second error is to misunderstand what Ibn Sīnā means by saying *qāla bi-l-ṯānī*. Goichon understands this to be "professing dualism," a reading which Goodman, Cruz Hernández, and Sebti also adopt.[119] Goichon clarifies that this is not a Manichaean dualism. Rather, it is a dualism in the sense that after "having desired something other than the Truth, one is not among those who profess unity."[120] Her clarification aside, this interpretation misses that Ibn Sīnā is not focusing here on belief—be it monotheistic or dualist—but rather on the motivation and ultimate goal of one's pursuit of knowledge. I follow Inati in connecting this passage to *Pointers* IX.5, where Ibn Sīnā differentiates knowers and non-knowers by saying that the knowers seek the First Truth for its sake alone, not for any other reason; while the non-knowers seek it out of desire for reward or fear of punishment.[121] This is why Ibn Sīnā goes on to say that whoever finds knowledge (*ʿirfān*) as if he had not found it, but rather as if he found what is known through that knowledge, "plunges into the depth of arrival."[122]

The next error in translating and interpreting this passage follows naturally from understanding Ibn Sīnā's use of *ʿirfān* to mean gnosis or mystical knowledge: translating *wuṣūl* (and the related *wāṣilīn*) as "union," the ultimate fruition of mystical knowledge.[123] This is not, however, how Ibn Sīnā employs the term *wuṣūl*; rather, it stands in for fully achieving the perfection of a given faculty. In the case of the rational soul, *wuṣūl* represents the achievement of its ultimate perfection—making contact (*ittiṣāl*) with the active intellect.

Ibn Sīnā then mentions that there are additional stages in front of the knower which are no fewer in number than the stages that are behind him. He does not, however, elaborate on them, aside from saying speech cannot make these stages known, and that only the faculty of the Imagery can indicate anything about them. Those who want to know these stages, he says, should become among the people of direct Experience. It may appear as if Ibn Sīnā

(*wuṣūl*). While Ibn Sīnā does discuss *ḏawq* in the *Pointers*, he does not use the term *al-maʿrifa al-ḏawqiyya*. And while Ibn Sīnā's use of *ḏawq* is connected to experience, it does not express the experience of pleasure; nor does it feature among the stages to the knower's arrival (*wuṣūl*); Elamrani-Jamal, "Vision contemplative," 149–150.

119 Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 498; Goodman, *Avicenna*, 182; Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 74; Sebti, "La notion de *mušāhada*," 166.

120 Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 498n3.

121 Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 83.

122 Shihadeh suggests that Ibn Sīnā's advocacy of seeking God purely for the sake of God, rather than for one's individual perfection, may come across as irrational or cryptic. This is because, following Ibn Sīnā's own philosophical system, the proper way to lead one's life is through the pursuit of knowledge. Acquiring knowledge and perfection via knowledge, rather than reaching God, would be the aim; Shihadeh, "Mystic and Sceptic," 116–117.

123 Sebti, "La notion de *mušāhada*," 166; Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 75.

is hinting at some ineffable aspect of his epistemology. In fact, this is not the only place where he refers to the seeming ineffability of the experience of making contact with the active intellect. After the active intellect illuminates the rational soul with intelligibles, as Ibn Sīnā puts it in the *Provenance and Destination*, "the senses perceive an *indescribable* grandeur and power that belongs to God."[124] Gutas argues that we must not understand Ibn Sīnā's use of terms like "indescribable" as meaning "inherently ineffable;" rather, it is only ineffable for certain individuals. He compares the "ineffability" of direct Experience (*mušāhada*) of the intelligibles by making contact with the active intellect to Ibn Sīnā's metaphor of Taste (*ḏawq*).[125] That is to say, much like how an impotent person can only know about the pleasure of sex discursively but cannot actually experience it, someone who is not among the people of direct Experience can learn of the intellectual joy associated with receiving the effluence of the intelligibles upon making contact with the active intellect, but can never fully experience/understand it.[126] Merely because some individuals have not had or are incapable of having a particular experience, and therefore incapable of fully understanding and thereby accurately expressing it, does not mean that that experience is itself ineffable. In this case, only the elite knowers reach the highest stages of intellectual knowledge.

Ibn Sīnā adduces the metaphor of Taste while making this very same point in his commentary on the *Theology of Aristotle*:

Attainment is something, while true Experience is something else. True Experience follows attainment when [one's] concern is turned toward the true One and is cut off from every preoccupation and obstacle in order to contemplate It, until along with attainment

الإدراك شيء والمشاهدة الحقّة شيء والمشاهدة الحقّة تالية للإدراك إذا صرفت الهمّة إلى الواحد الحقّ وقطعت عن كلّ خالج وعائق به ينظر إليه حتّى كان مع الإدراك شعور بالمدرَك من حيث

124 *fa-yarā l-ḥissu ʿaẓamatan wa-qudratan lā tūṣafu*; *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, 111.18, 119.17–18; trans. mod. from Gutas, "Intellect," 2014, 15–16; emphasis original. Earlier in the *Provenance and Destination*, Ibn Sīnā also characterizes as "indescribable" (*la yumkinu an tūṣaf*) the happiness that we acquire upon making contact with the active intellect after our souls separate from our bodies; *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, 111.14, 112.22.

125 Gutas, "Intellect," 2014, 21.

126 In her commentary, Inati suggests that what Ibn Sīnā means by saying that the excluded stages cannot be understood or explained via language results from language being a human faculty of this world, therefore it follows that language is inadequate for expressing otherworldly affairs; *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 39. This fails to consider the extent to which Ibn Sīnā relies on the Imagination—an animal faculty—to translate data that the intellect receives from the supernal realm. If Inati were right, no particular or universal knowledge from the supernal realm could be communicated to humans, meaning there would be no clairvoyance and, most significantly, no prophecy.

there comes about an awareness of the object of attainment as something appropriate and pleasurable that is the joy of the pure soul that is in that very state and free from any trial, arriving at the beloved (which is beloved in itself—not insofar as it is simply an object of attainment and an intelligible, but rather insofar as it is beloved in its substance). Since preoccupations do obscure attainment, however more so [with regard to] true Experience? I say that *this* [true Experience] *is something about which only experience can inform you. It is not something known via syllogism*. For, in the case of every one of the sensible and intelligible objects, there are aspects [of it] that are known by syllogism[127] and certain properties of it that are known by experience. Just as taste is not grasped through a syllogism, and likewise the essence of sensory pleasures (in fact, the most that can be attained of them through syllogism is the vague affirmation of [their existence] on the basis of analysis), so too, with regard to intellectual pleasures and the essence of the states of directly Experiencing the highest beauty, *the syllogism provides you only with the fact that they are more excellent in splendor. As for their specific nature, only direct contact informs you about this*. Not everything is made easily attainable.[128]

المدرك المناسب اللذيذ الذي هو بهجة النفس الزكية التي هي في حالها تلك والمخلّصة عن كلّ محنة الواصلة إلى العشّيق الذي هو بذاته عشّيق لا من حيث هو مدرك فقط ومعقول بل من حيث هو عشّيق في جوهره ولمّا كان الإدراك قد تحجب عنه الشواغل فيكف المشاهدة الحقّة وأقول إنّ هذا الأمر لا ينبئك عنه إلّا بالتجربة وليس ممّا يعقل بالقياس فإنّ في كلّ واحد من الأمور الحسّيّة والأمور العقليّة أحوال تعلم بالقياس وخواصّ أحواله تعلم بالتجربة وكما أنّ الطعم لا يلحق بالقياس وكذلك كنه اللذّات الحسّيّة بل أكثر ما يدرك منها بالقياس إثباتها المبهم عن التفصيل كذلك في اللذّة العقليّة وكنه أحوال المشاهدة للجمال الأعلى إنّما يعطيك القياس منها أنّها أفضل بهجة وأمّا خاصيّتها فليس ينبيك إلّا المباشرة وليس كلّ بميسّر لها

127 I follow Adamson's reading of this passage in adopting the manuscript variant *wa-l-umūri l-ʿaqliyyati aḥwālun* [sic] *tuʿlamu* in place of the reading that appears in the edition, *bal akṯari mā yudraku min-hā*; see next note for citation. The occurrence of the latter shortly after its errant inclusion here clearly indicates a scribal error.

128 "*Commentary on the* Theology of Aristotle," 44.5–16 (emphasis added); trans. mod. from Adamson, "Non-Discursive Thought," 108; cf. trans. in Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge*, 61; and in Gutas, "Intellect," 2014, 18. This passage ends with a variant to the Prophetic tradition *kullun muyassarun li-mā ḫuliqa la-hu*. On the *ḥadīṯ*, see below, note 147. Morris understands Ibn Sīnā's aim in this passage as affirming that "rational, verifiable processes of thought and (intellectual) perception" distinguish true Experience from false, not

Similar to the passages in the *Pointers* and the *Provenance and Destination*, it appears as if Ibn Sīnā is asserting that there is something ineffable about "experiencing the highest beauty," or making contact with the active intellect. However, as Adamson concludes, what Ibn Sīnā emphasizes here—as in the other texts—is that syllogistic knowledge cannot convey to you what the very experience of making contact with the active intellect is like.[129] In an investigation into the possibility of mysticism in the last three chapters of the *Pointers*, Janssens likewise concludes that there is no non-syllogistic knowledge of God.[130] This is in the very same way that a syllogism cannot convey to an impotent person what the very experience of having sex is like, or to a blind person what viewing Mona Lisa's smile is like, even if a syllogism can convey that both experiences are pleasurable.

Additionally, Ibn Sīnā does not here argue that what the rational soul acquires from the active intellect is "beyond demonstration,"[131] if we understand "demonstration" in the technical sense of syllogistic knowledge. If that were so, we would be incapable of understanding intelligibles, of engaging in the very activity that Ibn Sīnā sees as the primary function of the soul and the only true knowledge. Rather, he highlights the Imagery's role in storing the images of what the theoretical faculty has acquired after the Imagination translates the intelligible data into sensible data. Bearing in mind that all intelligibles are in the form of a syllogism and that the faculties involved in translating and storing the intelligibles acquired from the active intellect are faculties of the animal soul and are therefore located in a bodily organ, it does not follow that the highest stages of intellectual knowledge and the intelligibles that are acquired in those stages are ineffable; only the affective experience is.[132]

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the "feelings" (*šuʿūr*) associated with Experience; Morris, "Philosopher-Prophet," 180n24. While he is correct that *mušāhada* is grounded in Ibn Sīnā's philosophical psychology, he misunderstands the meaning and role of *šuʿūr* here. It does not signify "feelings," but rather the awareness that is necessary for pleasure to occur in response to the attainment of knowledge.

129 Adamson, "Non-Discursive Thought," 109. One may compare this to Rist's discussion of Plotinus's mystical experience: "We cannot use analogy, or deductive reasoning, to describe it fully. It is not merely a world whose existence we simply infer; it is a reality which we come to experience empirically, not purely by reasoning;" "Back to the Mysticism of Plotinus," 194.

130 Janssens, "Philosophical Mysticism," 42.

131 Hughes, *The Texture of the Divine*, 95.

132 See Gutas's discussion of this in "Intellect," 2014, 15–22. Hughes eventually reaches this same conclusion, but to say that the details of contact with the active intellect (not divine intellect) are beyond demonstration is not the same as to say that "what the rational soul learns in its conjunction (*ittiṣāl*) with the divine Intellect is beyond demonstration;" Hughes, *The Texture of the Divine*, 95.

4 Characteristics of the Knower

Ibn Sīnā concludes the ninth chapter by providing a variety of descriptions of the knower who has "arrived" at the Truth. He characterizes the knower as naturally cheerful (*hašš*, *bašš*) and smiling (*bassām*), on account of his delight in the Truth (**IX.21**).[133] Later, he claims that the knower is courageous (*šujāʿ*), generous (*jawwād*), and forgiving (*šaffāḥ*) and forgetful (*nassāʾ*) of wrongdoings (**IX.24**).[134] This is not the first time that Ibn Sīnā has used such terms to describe the state of one who pursues intellectual reflection. In the *Epistle on Love*, he observes that intellectual reflection of beautiful forms leads one to nobility (*rifʿa*) and goodness (*ḫayriyya*), and makes one refined (*ẓarīf*) and kind (*laṭīf*).[135]

There are times when the knower cannot bear even the light whisper of a rustling (**IX.22**). This occurs in the moments (*awqāt*) when his innermost self (his rational soul) is roused toward the Truth, but a veil between his soul and the Truth appears before it can make contact with the active intellect. As for when the moment of arrival actually does occur, the knower is either fully occupied with the Truth; or, if his rational soul is strong, "he is open to both sides," meaning his rational soul is strong enough to engage in intellectual activities while simultaneously prudently managing the lower corporeal faculties.[136] A passage from the De Anima of the *Cure* clarifies that this is characteristic of someone with a highly developed faculty of Imagination and a strong rational soul.

وقد يتّفق في بعض الناس أن تُخلق فيه القوّة المتخيّلة شديدةً جدّاً غالبةً حتّى أنّها لا تستولي عليها الحواسّ ولا تعصيها المصوّرة وتكون النفس أيضاً قويّةً لا يبطل التفاتُها إلى العقل وما قِبَلَ العقل انصبابَها إلى الحواسّ

In some people, the faculty of Imagination may happen to have been created so very strong and dominant that the senses cannot overpower it and the Imagery[137] cannot disobey it. The rational soul is also [created very] strong [in them], so that its turning toward the [active] intellect and what is with the intellect does not paralyze its application to the senses.[138]

133 *al-Išārāt*, IX.21, 364.10.

134 IX.24, 365.14–366.2.

135 *Traités Mystiques*, 1894, 3:15.12–15; trans. in Fackenheim, "A Treatise on Love," 221.

136 *al-Išārāt*, IX.22, 365.5–6.

137 In some earlier texts, Ibn Sīnā called the Imagery (*al-ḫayāl*) the Form-bearing faculty (*al-muṣawwira*).

138 *Avicenna's De Anima*, IV.2, 173.9–12; trans. mod. from Gutas, "Imagination," 2014, 345; cf. trans. in Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 159.

Continuing his description of the knower, Ibn Sīnā states that he is not concerned with searching (*tajassus* and *taḥassus*) for information (**IX.23**), which should be understood as an allusion to his advanced ability to Guess Correctly (*ḥads*) the middle term of a syllogism, a process which is characterized by a lack of research, investigation, or any other kind of mental motion.[139] Nor is he overcome with anger when he witnesses things of which he disapproves. He is, overall, very calm and collected, on account of his devotion to the philosophical investigation of "God's secret concerning destiny."[140] This is a very intriguing passage, as it could be taken as an allusion to the *Epistle on the Secret of Predestination*, which Reisman and Gutas have declared to be spuriously associated with Ibn Sīnā. It is more likely, however, an allusion to the relation of the celestial realm to the earthly realm, something which Ibn Sīnā elsewhere refers to with the word "secret" (*sirr*).[141]

The knower's concerns vary based on circumstances (**IX.25**). To the knower, "living in squalor and living in opulence are equivalent," but there are times when he prefers to live in squalor; the same can be said with regard to things that are malodorous and things that are perfumed. He prefers the lesser of the two "when what occurs to his mind is to belittle anything but the Truth."[142] Similarly, at times the knower has an inclination for ornamentation, loves the best of all things, and detests what is incomplete and what is worthless. He seeks beauty in all things, since beauty is a virtue of the good favor of the first providence and is close to the kind of thing that he wants to devote himself to. This is why, as Ibn Sīnā observes in the similar discussion in the *Epistle on Love*, the prophet admonished, "Seek what you need in beautiful faces."[143] The extent to

139 *al-Išārāt*, IX.23, 365.9. Inati mistakenly attributes this characteristic of the knower to the fact that the "Truth or God knows everything; therefore, for the knower to know the Truth is, at the same time, to know everything else since his knowing the Truth bestows on him the same attributes of the Truth;" Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 40. What Inati is describing here is the perfection that the rational soul can achieve (i.e., becoming an intellectual universe) only after it has separated from its body. Ibn Sīnā, on the other hand, is using these sections to characterize the knower's rational soul, which has achieved the utmost perfection possible while still connected to a body.

140 *fa-inna-hu mustabṣirun bi-sirri llāhi fī l-qadar*; *al-Išārāt*, IX.23, 365.10.

141 I address this more in the next chapter on *Pointers* X. On the *Epistle on the Secret of Predestination*, see Hourani, "The Secret of Destiny." On its spuriousness, see Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 490; citing Reisman, *Making*, 140n79.

142 *istawā ʿinda l-ʿārifi l-qašfu wa-l-tarafu … wa-ḏālika ʿinda-mā yakūnu l-hājisu bi-bālihi stiḥqāru mā ḥalā l-ḥaqqu*; *al-Išārāt*, IX.25, 366.5–7.

143 *uṭlubū l-ḥawāʾija ʿinda ḥisāni l-wujūh*; Mehren, *Traités Mystiques*, 1894, 3:16.4. The ḥadīṯ also appears as "seek what is good" (*uṭlubū l-ḥayr*); see Suyūṭī, *Jāmiʿ al-aḥādīṯ*, 1:#3204, 462.21–463.2.

which one has these inclinations differs among the knowers, and even can vary among an individual knower from one moment to another.

Ibn Sīnā states that the knower may be distracted by what he is brought to (the knowledge he acquires via contact with the active intellect), which leads him to pay no attention to anything else (**IX.26**).[144] As such, the knower is among the category of people for whom religious obligations are not imposed. This is so because, for religious obligations to be imposed, the person upon whom they are being imposed must be aware of what is going on around him at the moment of the imposition.[145] Since the knower may be stunned out of awareness by his contact with the active intellect, he is not in that moment bound to religious obligations.[146]

Ibn Sīnā's final words of the ninth chapter (**IX.27**) assert that the supernal realm of the intelligibles is not suitable or accessible for everyone, and that what he has included in this section "is an object of laughter for the heedless, and something to be considered for the scholar. Whoever hears it and recoils from it, let him accuse his soul of not being appropriate for it. 'All is made easily attainable for what it was created for.'"[147]

144 *al-Išārāt*, IX.26, 366.14–367.2.

145 Inati adduces Q 2:233 and 2:286 to show that Ibn Sīnā's statement about the inapplicability of religious obligations is in accordance with Qur'ānīc principles; Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 41.

146 Sebti asks "Are not all men equal before the revealed Law," and answers that, for Ibn Sīnā, "the revealed Law cannot be ignored or disdained by philosophers on the pretext that it is addressed to the people;" *Avicenne*, 237 and 246. While correct, Ibn Sīnā does clearly offer a different pretext which calls for the obligations of religious law not to apply—at least temporarily—to philosophers.

147 *mā yaštamilu ʿalay-hi hāḏā l-fannu ḍuḥkatun li-l-muġaffali ʿibratun li-l-muḥaṣṣili fa-man samiʿahu fa-šmaʾazza ʿan-hu fa-l-yattahim nafsahu laʿalla-hā lā tunāsibuhu wa-kullun muyassarun li-mā ḫuliqa la-hu*; *al-Išārāt*, IX.27, 367.5–6. Ġazālī, in the "religious introduction" to his *Precipitance*, declares that he aims to show that the philosophers' conclusions are "objects of laughter for the intelligent" (*maḍāḥik al-ʿuqalāʾ*), perhaps an implicit reference and rebuke to what Ibn Sīnā says here; *Incoherence*, 3.7. Note that Ibn Sīnā's concluding words are a *ḥadīṯ* that he often turns to: "All is made easily attainable for what was created for it" (*kullun muyassarun li-mā ḫuliqa la-hu*); reported in Buḫārī, Book 97 (*Kitāb al-tawḥīd*), #7551, with a similar version in #7552; Khan (trans.), *Saḥīh Buḫārī*, 9:393. Available online at https://sunnah.com/bukhari/97 (accessed 7 October 2022). In addition to citing a variant of this twice in the Metaphysics of the *Cure*, Ibn Sīnā also ended his *On the Decree and Predestination* by quoting it; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.6, 347.2; and X.2, 388.8; Mehren, *Traités Mystiques*, 1899, 4:25.8; cf. Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 501n5.

5 A New Metaphor for a Familiar Epistemology

A frequent feature of the argument for Ibn Sīnā's mysticism and Sufism is the central role of the knower in *Pointers* IX. Consistently neglected is the fact that Ibn Sīnā first introduces the knower in *Pointers* VIII as a means to differentiate between degrees of intellectual and sensory attainment and the relative intensity of the joy associated with each. Of course, the knowers, with their preference for intellectual attainments, experience a far greater pleasure in this life and the next than do the non-knowers, who pursue base, sensory attainments.

Ibn Sīnā continues to develop this distinction in *Pointers* IX, beginning by distinguishing between how knowers and non-knowers understand the motivations, processes, and goals of activities like worship and asceticism. Non-knowers engage in these activities as a transaction. They are purchasing happiness in the afterlife by abstaining from pleasures and running through the motions of religious rituals in this life. Knowers, on the other hand, understand that the true end of ascetic and ritual activities is to train the body to aid the intellect, rather than distract it. The ultimate knower is the prophet, who reveals divine law and prescribes regular rituals as a reminder of the law and whence it came. The knower passes through various stages of intellectual development, which are characterized by an increasing ease of making contact with the supernal realm. The contact is fleeting at first, but in the highest stages the knower's theoretical intellect is able to devote itself to its higher function, while the practical intellect focuses on prudently managing the lower affairs of the body. The knower does not unite with the supernal realm or anything found therein. The knower's increasing ease of contact with the supernal realm bestows to him a kind, generous, forgiving demeanor.

Much like in *Pointers* VIII, the distinction separating knowers from non-knowers is the eminently intellectual nature of the knowers' activities and goals. Without bearing this in mind, one cannot properly understand *Pointers* IX. For instance, one would perhaps be inclined to understand Ibn Sīnā's use of terms like *riyāḍa* and *ʿirfān* in the sense of "spiritual exercise" and "mystical knowledge," respectively. Nevertheless, the use of Sufi terms does not inherently impart Sufi meaning.[148] Despite Ibn Sīnā's purposefully abstruse style, however, he nevertheless makes it abundantly clear that he is using these terms (and others) idiosyncratically, leaving behind all of the clues needed to understand them properly. Following those clues leads to the conclusion that Ibn

148 Janssens makes a similar observation in his article on philosophy and Sufism in Ġazālī: "The use of Sufi vocabulary in itself is no guarantee of a genuine Sufi perspective;" "Al-Ghazālī between Philosophy (*Falsafa*) and Sufism (*Taṣawwuf*)," 619.

Sīnā is rehashing concepts that are already familiar from more straightforward works spanning his entire career, and that he is employing many of the same terms and concepts found therein to do so here.[149]

Those terms and concepts can be found in places like the metaphysics of the *Guidance* (III.5) and *Cure* (X.2), on the need for social cooperation, prophets, prophecy, law, and religious rituals for justice in this world and happiness in the next; *Provenance and Destination* III.17 and *Cure*, De Anima IV.2 on veridical dreams; and *Guidance* III.6 and *Provenance and Destination* III.14, on the fact that most people have undeveloped intellects and cannot comprehend what attracts the knowers to their intellectual pursuits; and the *Epistle on Love*, on the characteristics and demeanor of those who pursue knowledge of the Truth.

One may see parallels between Ibn Sīnā's knower and a Sufi master. The knower, as we have seen, may successfully hide his interior state while in contact with the supernal realm: he may be "absent while present, departing while stationary" (IX.13). The Sufi master, as Knysh observes, has performed a similar process of interiorization. He quotes ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021), who declares of the Sufi, "He discloses his outer manner to people, while safeguarding from them his inner state."[150] Furthermore, the ideal Sufi should perform such actions as humility, modesty, patience, gratitude, and sincerity, characteristics similar to those that Ibn Sīnā attributes to the knower. Only the elite Sufis will excel in this, however, as most will be too preoccupied with their mundane concerns, much how Ibn Sīnā differentiates the elite knower from the common non-knower. Yet not all is alike between the Sufi and Ibn Sīnā's knower. The Sufi, according to Abū ʿAlī al-Daqqāq (d. 495/1015) may rightfully experience jealousy and anger toward those who mechanically perform their rituals.[151] This does not accord with the generous, forgiving, cheerful nature of Ibn Sīnā's knower (IX.21, 24). Nor does the knowers' indifference to opulence and squalor (IX.25) quite match up with the Sufi's renunciation of worldly goods. A resemblance between how Ibn Sīnā describes the knower and how Sufis describe themselves, and their comparable use of the common differenti-

149 Davidson has similarly observed that, despite Ibn Sīnā's "high-flown and mystifying diction" in *Pointers* IX, this chapter is not "anything other than a description of the philosopher who develops his intellect, dispenses with his sense faculties, and labors toward complete conjunction with the active intellect;" Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect*, 105n125. While I agree with most of what Davidson says here, I contend that the text does not support his assertion of "complete conjunction" with the active intellect.

150 Knysh, *Sufism*, 140; quoting Heer and Honerkamp, *Three Early Sufi Texts*, 155.

151 Knysh, *Sufism*, 140–141; quoting his own translation of *al-Qushayri's Epistle on Sufism*, 266–268.

ation between the masses and the elite, does not suffice to support claims that Ibn Sīnā experiments with or elaborates a Sufi philosophy in this chapter.

Furthermore, despite its frequent appearance as evidence for Ibn Sīnā's mysticism, in no way does *Pointers* IX represent a mystical bent on his epistemology. I fail to see evidence to support suggestions, such as Mukhtar Ali's, that in this chapter Ibn Sīnā "describes various modalities of perception and types of esoteric knowledge."[152] Nor does this chapter represent an evolution in doctrine. It does, however, feature a somewhat different presentation of Ibn Sīnā's doctrine through the metaphor of stations and stages. As he, himself, said in his autobiography, he had learned everything there was to learn in the philosophical disciplines by the time he reached his late teens.[153] "But today," he adds as a sexagenarian, "my grasp of it is more mature."[154] Teenage Ibn Sīnā knew what there was to know and, as this book argues, had largely settled on how to express that knowledge (at least when it comes to the soul).[155] What *Pointers* IX may represent, then, is this process of Ibn Sīnā's maturation. Perhaps he frames his discussion around the stations of the knower in the *Pointers*, but not in his other philosophical summae or monographs on the Metaphysics of the Rational Soul, because his grasp of the material contained therein was still maturing. In other words, as he aged, he came to understand better how his conception of the divisions of metaphysics deviated from that of the Aristotelian tradition, and how best to present it. From this perspective, the *Pointers* contains Ibn Sīnā's fullest exposition of the Metaphysics of the Rational Soul.

In the next chapter, we will see how Ibn Sīnā applies the knower/non-knower dichotomy to give a thoroughly scientific explanation for how knowers perform outwardly supernatural phenomena that are well beyond the reach of non-knowers.

152 Ali, *Philosophical Sufism*, 4. Ali supports this claim with a reference to Inati's translation of *Pointers* VIII–X and Corbin's *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*.

153 He makes a similar claim near the end of the section of *Philosophy* dedicated to natural philosophy; *Dānišnāma*, Ṭabīʿiyyāt, 144.4–145.3; trans. in Morris, "Philosopher-Prophet," 186–187; and Achena and Massé, *Le Livre de science*, II, 89.

154 Gutas argues that Ibn Sīnā wrote the autobiography sometime in the last decade of his life. If Gutas is correct that Ibn Sīnā was born some ten years prior to the customary date provided for his birth (370/980), that would mean Ibn Sīnā was in his late 50s or 60s when he wrote his autobiography; Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 18 (trans.), 12n3 (birthdate), 224–225 (dating of autobiography).

155 Adamson makes a similar observation in "Correcting Plotinus," 61, 74.

CHAPTER 4

The Soul, Science, and the Supernatural

The tenth and final chapter of Book II of the *Pointers* provides an account of the seemingly supernatural abilities of the knower (*al-ʿārif*), the individual of supreme intellectual perfection whom we have come to know from *Pointers* VIII and IX. Following up on what Ibn Sīnā has already said in *Pointers* VII of providence (*al-ʿināya*), the universal order of the good (*niẓām al-ḫayr*), and the universal and particular knowledge that belong to the celestial intellects and souls as principles of generation and corruption in the earthly realm, this chapter repeatedly, emphatically insists that the causes of such things as miracles, magic, and clairvoyance can be known, and that they can be known scientifically.[1]

Ibn Sīnā refers to this in the chapter's title: *asrār al-āyāt*, "the inner meanings of the signs." As I have argued throughout this book, it is imperative that we carefully attend to the words Ibn Sīnā uses and how he uses them, not only here in the *Pointers*, but throughout his corpus. Failure to do so will inevitably lead us astray. In the case of this chapter's title, a superficial reading would lead us to conclude that the chapter is dedicated to certain "secrets" (*asrār*), mysteries of the supernatural that cannot be known. Far from it! In fact, Ibn Sīnā's use of the same word (*sirr*, singular of *asrār*) in *Provenance and Destination* when discussing providence, the celestial causes for and knowledge of what happens on earth, and the occurrence of rare events confirms that the *sirr* in question is not a secret.[2] Rather, it is a scientific explanation of a complex system of cause and effect linking the celestial and earthly realms, knowledge of which only certain, intellectually mature souls can obtain. This complex system, and knowledge thereof, is what he also refers to in this chapter as "supernal wisdom" (*al-ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya*, X.9), a coinage destined to cause much confusion among modern scholars.

The events being discussed here are anything but supernatural, mysterious or unknowable.[3] Ibn Sīnā frequently exhorts his reader to seek the causes of

1 For an analysis of what he describes as the sorry state of the historiography of Islamicate occult science (including magic), see Melvin-Koushki, "Is (Islamic) Occult Science Science?"

2 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, II.8, 86.10; French trans. in Michot, *Genèse et Retour*, 61. Ibn Sīnā similarly uses *asrār* in the epilogue of *Lesser Destination*; *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XVI, 141.6. The epilogue is translated in Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 22–24.

3 Inati emphasizes the same point in her translation of *Pointers* X.30; *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*,

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strange or unusual phenomena in what he calls "the teachings of natural philosophy" (*maḍāhib al-ṭabīʿa*), where such causes can, indeed, be found. When I use terms like "unusual" phenomena, I do so bearing in mind Ibn Sīnā's own terms: "strange things" (*al-umūr al-ġarība*, X.30), "oddities" (*ġarāʾib*, X.31), and "reports [about knowers] that nearly overturn the norm" (*aḫbār takādu taʾtī bi-qalbi l-ʿādati*, X.25).[4] Considering his frequent references to natural philosophy, it is abundantly clear that by using these terms he is not referring to preternatural, unnatural, or supernatural events.[5] To the contrary, these are eminently natural, albeit rare occurrences.

The rare occurrences that he discusses are the knower's ability to fast for an extended period of time and perform feats of strength (X.1–6). Following this, he devotes the bulk of the chapter to Imaginative knowledge and prophecy, or explaining how certain individuals are able to provide information about past, present, and future events. The chapter ends (X.25–30) with examples of and explanations for motive power and prophecy (telekinesis) in prophets and magicians.[6]

1 Marvelous Feats

Ibn Sīnā begins the tenth chapter (**X.1–2**) by positing an individual—the by-now familiar "knower"—who is capable of performing unusual feats. The aim here is to provide a scientifically valid explanation of those feats, based on

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106n86. David Bennett similarly observes that Ibn Sīnā's aim, at least when it comes to the sections on veridical dreaming, is to provide a "philosophical account" based on his faculty psychology; "Avicenna's Dreaming in Context," 90.

4 Note Ibn Sīnā's presumably purposeful use of the term *al-ʿāda* ("the norm"), but not in the common locution used by *mutakallimūn* to refer to miracles, *ḫarq al-ʿāda* ("rupture of the norm"). Sebti observes that he never uses that phrase because "for him, miracles are not a rupture of the habitual course of things, but an event which he explains through the principles of his cosmology;" *Avicenne*, 38n2.

5 Fakhry has described the phenomena in this chapter as both supernatural and preternatural; *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 181.

6 The third mode of prophecy, intellective, is addressed in *Pointers* IX and III. On Ibn Sīnā's three modes of prophecy, see Elamrani-Jamal, "Multiplicité"; al-Akiti, "Three Properties of Prophethood"; and, with particular attention to the political and intellectual implications of Ibn Sīnā's account of prophecy, Morris, "Philosopher-Prophet." For discussion of Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's commentary on several sections in this chapter, and their relation to Rāzī's theory of occult powers, see Noble, *Philosophising the Occult*, chapters 6 (138–168) and 7 (169–199). For discussion of Ibn Taymiyya's commentary, both critical and praising, on *Pointers* X, see Michot, "Ibn Taymiyya's Commentary."

psychological and physiological principles.[7] He encourages his reader not to automatically discount the veracity of reports of such feats.

إذا بلغك أنّ عارفاً أمسك عن القوت المرزوء مدّةً غير معتادة فأسِحْ بالتصديق واعتبرْ ذلك من مذاهب الطبيعة المشهورة

[x.1] When you hear that a knower has abstained from [even] an insufficient amount of food for an unusual amount of time, give credence to the truth [of this]. Reflect on that on the basis of the well-known teachings of natural philosophy.

تذكّرْ أنّ القوى الطبيعيّة التي فينا إذا شغلت عن تحريك الموادّ المحمودة بهضم الموادّ الرديئة انحفظت الموادّ المحمودة قليلة التحلّل غنيّة عن البدل فربّما انقطع عن صاحبها الغذاء مدّة طويلة لو انقطع مثله في غير حالته بل عُشرَ مدّته هلك وهو مع ذلك محفوظ الحياة

[x.2] Remember that whenever our natural faculties are diverted from moving praiseworthy matter by means of the digestion of blameworthy matter, the praiseworthy matter is preserved while just a small [amount] is dissolved, without need for replacement. At times, nourishment is kept away from the possessor of [this praiseworthy matter] for a long period. But if the likes of it [this nourishment] were cut off from [him] while he is in a different state—even for a tenth of the period of time—he would perish; while, despite that, his [the knower's] life will be preserved.[8]

That there are circumstances in which an animal can abstain from nourishment for an extended period of time is something that Ibn Sīnā has elaborated elsewhere. He has said in the *Lesser Destination*, *Cure*, and *Salvation*,

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7 As such, these sections amount to much more than a mere discussion "dealing with the food preferences of knowers," as Bennett characterizes them; "Avicenna's Dreaming in Context," 92.

8 *al-Išārāt*, x.1–2, 371.2–10. Inati misreads this passage in her translation: "If one in a different state is deprived in a similar way …" *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 92. While she correctly identifies the "different state" as one in which the knower does not possess the praiseworthy matter, she misidentifies the antecedent of the pronoun in *miṯluhu* as *ṣāḥib* rather than *ġiḏā'*. Goichon reads *miṯluhu* correctly, but leaves out any mention of *ṣāḥib*; *Directives et remarques*, 504. As one may now suspect, Cruz Hernández's translation resembles Goichon's; *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 80. Ibn Sīnā was not the first to associate such feats as extended fasting with philosophers. In the Arabic translation of what Gutas suggests was Galen's epitome of Plato's *Republic*, Galen observes that "true philosophers" have reached the pinnacle in terms of regulating their intake of food and drink, as well as their desire for sex; see the translation of this passage in Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 337–338.

قد يكون الحيوان غير مشتهٍ الغذاء البتّة وهو أوفق شيء يكون له وكارهاً له وتبقى علّته مدّة طويلة فإذا زال العائق عاد إلى واجبه في طبعه فاشتدّ جوعه وشهوته للغذاء حتّى لا يصبر عنه ويهلك عند فقدانه

An animal may not desire food at all—even though it is the most agreeable thing for it—rejecting it and remaining without it for a long period of time. When the impediment [allowing it to remain without food] abates, it returns to what is required by its nature, so its hunger and appetite for food increase to the point that it cannot endure without it and perishes in its absence.[9]

The distinction between this scenario and the one elaborated in the *Pointers* is the cause of the ability to abstain from nourishment. For the average animal (humans included), to be able to abstain from food—to not even desire food—is usually the result of an impediment, like an illness. The knower, however, does so not because of an illness, but because of his rational soul's dominance over its body, even if he does enjoy physiological benefits similar to what an illness provides (cf. x.4).

If you hear of such a situation, Ibn Sīnā says in the *Pointers*, you should not regard it as untrue, as it can be explained by the well-known teachings of natural philosophy (*maḍāhib al-ṭabīʿa al-mašhūra*). Throughout this chapter, he frequently declares that certain unusual abilities of the knowers are, while rare, completely and thoroughly explainable with reference to natural processes that we study in medicine and natural philosophy.[10] He emphatically denies—as we will see when discussing x.24—that these actions and abilities cannot be explained by scientific investigation.

Ibn Sīnā proceeds in **x.2** to discuss the natural processes that explain the situation introduced in the first section. When the faculties of the animal soul become distracted, the functions that rely on them may diminish dramatically. In the case of digestion, the process of dissolving food comes to a near standstill, removing the need to replace what has been dissolved by eating more food.[11] This allows the individual in question to endure in his abstention from nourishment.

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9 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, xv, 130.4–6; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, ix.7, 350.2–4; *al-Najāt*, 328.10–13.

10 Cf. *al-Išārāt*, x.5, x.7, x.25, x.31. Janssens has concluded from this that there is no supernatural assistance whatsoever in Ibn Sīnā's account of the miracles and marvels that he discusses in Chapter x; "Philosophical Mysticism," 50.

11 On digestion in the pre-modern Arabic-Islamic medical tradition, with references to Ibn Sīnā's *Canon of Medicine*, see Good, *Medicine, Rationality and Experience*, 101–108.

What can have such a distracting effect on the body? As I mentioned above, and as we saw in the analysis of *Pointers* VIII, one such distraction can be illness. Ibn Sīnā begins, however, with distractions that arise from the body-soul relation (**X.3**). He reminds his reader that he has already explained in *Pointers* III.6[12] that figurations properly belonging to the rational soul can affect the body, and vice versa.[13] The examples he adduces, however, do not quite prove his point. He mentions someone overcome by fear consequently losing appetite or no longer being able to perform basic functions.[14] This example is the same as he provides in the *Lesser Destination*, *Cure*, and *Salvation*, where he states that one who is "fearful experiences a victory or pleasure but is unaware of it and so does not derive pleasure from it."[15] Fear, however, is a figuration proper to the animal soul, not the rational soul. Nevertheless, since digestion is a function of the vegetative soul, Ibn Sīnā has still established the point that faculties proper to different levels of soul can affect one another.

He elaborates on this in the next section, addressing the ways in which the rational soul as the "soul-at-peace" affects the body (**X.4**). When the soul-at-peace has successfully gained mastery over the body's faculties, those lower faculties are then attracted toward the rational soul; in so doing, "the natural functions connected to the faculty of the vegetative soul halt; digestion does not occur, except for something even less than what occurs in the state of illness."[16] This begins the explanation of how the knower can endure for an extended period of time without nourishment, as mentioned in X.1. He observes that there are other instances in which the dissolution of matter (= digestion) is

12 *al-Išārāt*, III.6, 236–237.

13 Cf. Elamrani-Jamal, where he discusses the relation between the body and soul and its significance for prophecy according to Ibn Sīnā; "Multiplicité," 137. As we have already seen, Ibn Sīnā has also alluded to this in VIII.11.

14 "How could it not be so, as you know what befalls one who is feeling fear, namely the loss of appetite, impairment of digestion, and the inability [to perform] natural acts that were [previously] at his command?" (*wa-kayfa lā wa-anta taʿlamu mā yaʿtarī mustašʿira l-ḫawfi min suqūṭi l-šahwati wa-fasādi l-haḍmi wa-l-ʿajzi ʿan afʿālin ṭabīʿiyyatin kānat muwātiyatan*); *al-Išārāt*, X.3, 372.4–5. Goichon, and Cruz Hernández after her, translate *muwātiyatan* as "suitable" or "appropriate," rather than in the sense of being within one's power or ability; Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 504; Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 81; s.v, *w-t-y* in *Lisān al-ʿArab*, 15:150. For another example of the corporeal figurations affecting the rational soul, see the discussion of X.26 below.

15 [*ka-l-*]*ḫāʾifi yajidu l-ġalabata awi l-laḏḏata fa-lā yašʿuru bi-hā wa-lā yastaliḏḏu bi-hā*; *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XV, 129.12–13; *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.7, 349.16–17; *al-Najāt*, 328.6–7.

16 *fa-waqafati l-afʿālu l-ṭabīʿiyyatu l-mansūbatu ilā quwwati l-nafsi l-nabātiyyati fa-lam yaqaʿ mina l-taḥalluli illā dūna mā yaqaʿu fī ḥālati l-maraḍi*; *al-Išārāt*, X.4, 372.9–10. Cruz Hernández repeatedly mistranslates *taḥallul* as debilitation rather than dissolution (or digestion, as Ibn Sīnā is using it); *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 81–82.

reduced or halted: namely, when someone suffers from an illness that raises the body's temperature (which, although it halts the body's natural digestion process, itself causes some dissolution of matter on account of the fever). He also adduces an unspecified oppositional force, found in some illnesses, which weakens the body. The knower, whose rational soul dominates over its body, has the advantages that are found in illness without any of the drawbacks. His corporeal faculties attend to the rational soul's concerns, meaning that digestion halts. Without a fever, there is no excess heat digesting what food is already in the knower's body, meaning that he does not have to eat; nor has the illness weakened his strength. Additionally, he has the added benefit of the body resting from its motions. While the meaning here is not precisely clear, he is likely referring to involuntary movements resulting from illness. Given these considerations, the knower is more suitable for the preservation of his strength while abstaining from nourishment.

Right from the start, Ibn Sīnā places in its proper scientific context what some might take as marvelous. He concludes this section reiterating that none of what he has said is "contradictory to the teachings of natural philosophy."[17]

Having established that one can confidently explain extended fasting on the basis of natural philosophy, Ibn Sīnā extends this to other seemingly unnatural phenomena (**x.5**). He makes a statement similar to that in x.1, telling his reader that he should also not reject the veracity of any account he hears which mentions someone being able to perform "an action, initiate a motion, or [perform] a motion that is beyond the reach of the likes of him," as an explanation for that phenomenon can surely be found when one considers the teachings of natural philosophy.[18]

He begins **x.6** by building on what he mentioned in III.6 and x.3, namely that figurations of the body can have an effect on the soul, and vice versa. He observes that when a person's states are in balance, he has an appropriately limited amount of strength at his disposal. Ibn Sīnā is working in the context of Galenic humoral pathology, so when referring to a balance in one's states he means a balance of the four humors and their properties.[19] This clarifies, yet again, that medical—not mystical—knowledge explains these phenomena.

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17 *muḍādd li-maḍhabi l-ṭabīʿati*; *al-Išārāt*, x.4, 373.4–5.

18 [*aṭāqa bi-quwwatihi*] *fiʿlan aw taḥrīkan aw ḥarakatan yaḥruju ʿan wusʿi miṯlihi*; x.5, 373.7–8.

19 For the best overview of pre-modern Arabic medicine, see Pormann and Savage-Smith, *Medieval Islamic Medicine*, 9–12 (Greek background), 43–45 (humoral pathology). This builds on Ullmann's pioneering work in *Die Medizin im Islam*; and *Islamic Medicine*; humoral pathology addressed in the latter at 55–64.

When a person's states become out of balance, he may experience a certain variation in his normal strength. There may occur in his soul a figuration (*hay'a*) that dramatically reduces that amount of strength, as occurs when someone is scared or sad. Likewise, a different figuration may occur that multiplies the amount of strength at his disposal, as happens in a moment of anger (*ġaḍab*), rapturous joy (*faraḥ muṭrib*), or even moderate intoxication (*intišā' mu'tadal*). When a certain state of excitement (*hizza*) and fervor (*'izza*) arise in the knower, it transmits to the bodily faculties a certain dominance and they "blaze with fervor." The resulting increase in strength is "greater and weightier than what happens during intense delight or anger." This excitement and fervor result from the rational soul's contact with the supernal realm, which he expresses as "the unmediated truth, the principle of strength, and the source of mercy."[20] This is unmediated in the sense that the rational soul acquires knowledge directly from its contact with the active intellect, not through the mediation of corporeal faculties. Ibn Sīnā has already established in *Pointers* VIII that intellectual pleasures, and the joy that results from them, are greater than any physical ones. Additionally, in *Pointers* VIII and IX, he has demonstrated that the knower is characterized by having a most-powerful rational soul and highly developed intellectual faculties. In reminding his reader that figurations of the soul have an effect on the body, it follows that the pleasure

20 *fa-lā 'ajaba law 'annat li-l-'ārif hizzatun ka-mā ta'unnu 'inda l-faraḥi fa-awlati l-quwā llatī la-hu salāṭatan aw ġašiyathu 'izzatun ka-mā taġšā 'inda l-munāfasati fa-šta'lat quwāhu ḥamiyyatan wa-kāna ḏālika a'ẓama wa-ajsama mimmā yakūnu 'inda ṭarabin aw ġaḍabin wa-kayfa lā wa-ḏālika bi-ṣarīḥi l-ḥaqqi wa-mabda'i l-quwā wa-aṣli l-raḥmati*; *al-Išārāt*, x.6, 374.3–6. Inati translates the last sentence as, "How could it be otherwise, when this excitement results from having joy in the clear Truth, the principle of powers and the foundation of mercy;" *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 94. She understands the preposition *bi-* in *bi-ṣarīḥ* in the instrumental sense, but misunderstands the causality and actors in play. The "excitement" (*hizza*) does not result from "having joy in the Truth"—it *is* the joy, just expressed in a different way. Properly understood, there is no need to add "having joy" to the text (Inati does not indicate that this is her addition). More significantly, in capitalizing "Truth" (*al-ḥaqq*), Inati inaccurately intimates that the force acting upon the knower is God. Cruz Hernández does the same, capitalizing not only truth, but also principle and mercy; *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 83. This is precisely the opposite of what Ibn Sīnā repeatedly emphasizes throughout this chapter, namely that there are natural—not supernatural—explanations for all of these phenomena. Joy—or, in this case, vivacity—results from unmediated contact between the rational soul and the supernal realm, which is the source of the body's momentary, unusual strength. Unlike Inati, Goichon does not capitalize Truth in the text proper, though she does in a footnote referring to Ṭūsī's commentary; *Directives et remarques*, 506n1. Ṭūsī—likely the source of Inati's misunderstanding—widely misses the mark in his commentary, in which he identifies God as the source of the knower's power; *Šarḥ*, 2:1106.11–15.

that the knower experiences when making contact with the active intellect may result in possession of an overwhelming, unusual amount of strength.

2 Imaginative Knowledge

Whereas in X.1–6 Ibn Sīnā has alluded to the natural processes that explain the ability of a knower's rational soul to effect physical wonders within his body, in what follows he begins to address Imaginative knowledge, which can be a form of prophecy.[21] He asserts that, in a similar manner, natural philosophy can explain how a knower can correctly make predictions about the Unseen (*al-ġayb*) (**X.7**).[22]

2.1 *A Brief Excursus on Imaginative Knowledge*

Before continuing with the *Pointers*, it is worth briefly observing that Imaginative knowledge is different from intellective knowledge, even though they both originate in the supernal realm. Intellective knowledge and the acquisition of intelligible forms belongs to the human theoretical intellect (*al-ʿaql al-naẓarī*), which makes contact with the active intellect. It is able to acquire this knowledge due to its congenereity with the active intellect. The theoretical intellect

21 On this, see Gutas, "Imagination," 2014; and Gutas, "Intellect," 2014, 9–14. On Ibn Sīnā's rationalist prophetology, its relation to earlier *falāsifa*, and its appropriation by Ġazālī, see Griffel, "Muslim Philosophers' Rationalist Explanation of Muḥammad's Prophecy." Sebti discusses the Imagination and veridical dreams in *Avicenne*, 96–112.

22 The meaning of the term *al-ġayb* (and related terms, e.g., *muġayyabāt*) becomes apparent through the following passage from *Provenance and Destination*: "The function of this property [related to the Imagination] is to warn of [future] events and to indicate unseen [past and present] events. This occurs to most [people] in the state of sleep through dreams. But as for the prophet, this state occurs to him in both the state of sleeping and of wakefulness" (*wa-fiʿlu hāḏihi l-ḥāṣṣati huwa l-inḏāru bi-l-kāʾināti wa-l-dalālatu ʿalā l-muġayyabāti wa-qad yakūnu hāḏā li-akṯari l-nāsi fī ḥāli l-nawmi bi-l-ruʾyā wa-ammā l-nabīyyi fa-inna-mā yakūnu la-hu hāḏihi l-ḥālu fī ḥāli l-nawmi wa-l-yaqaẓati maʿan*); *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.17, 117.11–13; trans. slightly modified from Gutas, "Intellect," 2014, 9. Whereas intelligible concepts are the "thoughts" of the active intellect, the forms of particular events of the past, present, and future are the thoughts of the souls of the celestial spheres; Gutas, "Imagination," 2014, 338–340; "Intellect," 2014, 9–11. Gutas notes that *al-ġayb* is used in the Qurʾān to indicate past, present, and future events that are known to God and the angels (i.e., the souls of the celestial spheres), and refers to Q 3:44 and 12:102 as examples; 10n22. On *al-kāʾināt* specifically referring to future events, see Ibn Sīnā's use of this term together with the adjective *al-mustaqbala* in *Lesser Destination*; *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XIII, 121.12. Compare this with his similar use of *al-juzʾiyyāt al-mustaqbala* in *Guidance*; *al-Hidāya*, III.5, 295.2.

requires no tool in order to make contact with the active intellect (see chapter 2 on *Pointers* VII). The knowledge acquired through this contact is universal, since no particular (= corporeal) forms can belong to the incorporeal intellects. Imaginative knowledge, however, is particular; in other words, knowledge of particular events in the past, present, and future. Since the theoretical intellect is immaterial, it cannot acquire particular forms. This ability belongs to a different faculty of the soul, which Ibn Sīnā calls the practical intellect (*al-ʿaql al-ʿamalī*). It acquires this particular knowledge from the souls of the celestial spheres. Unlike the theoretical faculty, the practical faculty employs corporeal instruments when acquiring Imaginative knowledge: the faculties of Imagination and Estimation.[23] Ibn Sīnā pays particular attention in the next several sections to the Imagination's functioning and its relation to the rational soul.

Mousavian and Mostafavi have recently challenged the understanding, most prominently defended by Gutas and Hasse, that for Ibn Sīnā the animal soul's cognitive faculties of Imagination and Estimation cannot make direct contact with and receive information from the supernal realm. If this were possible, per Gutas and Hasse, then animals—who, like humans, possess faculties of Estimation and Imagination—could potentially receive intelligible or particular information from the supernal intellects and souls. In other words, they could become prophets.[24] The basis of Mousavian and Mostafavi's challenge is that the animal soul, as it exists in humans, is not a formal principle of the body's matter but a power of the immaterial rational soul.[25] Based on this understanding, they argue that the Estimation and Imagination, as they exist in humans, are neither material nor mortal.[26] They do not state their conclusion explicitly, but imply that the human Imagination and Estimation can, indeed, make direct contact with and receive information from the supernal realm.

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23 "As for intellectual forms, contact with them is through the theoretical intellect. As for these forms that we are discussing [i.e., of particular events], the [rational] soul conceptualizes them only by another faculty, namely the practical intellect, which the Imagination serves in this regard. Thus, the soul obtains particular things from the lofty intellectual substances by means of its faculty known as the practical intellect" (*fa-ammā l-ṣuwaru l-ʿaqliyyatu fa-inna l-ittiṣāla bi-hā bi-l-ʿaqli l-naẓariyyi wa-ammā hāḍihi l-ṣuwaru llatī l-kalāmu fī-hā fa-inna l-nafsa inna-mā tataṣawwaruhā bi-quwwatin uḫrā wa-huwa l-ʿaqlu l-ʿamaliyyu wa-yaḥdimuhu fī ḏālika l-bābi l-taḥayyulu fa-takūnu l-umūru l-juzʾiyyatu tanāluhā l-nafsu bi-quwwatihā llatī tusammā ʿaqlan ʿamaliyyan mina l-jawāhiri l-ʿāliyati l-ʿaqliyyati*); *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XIII, 117.3–5; cf. translation and discussion in Gutas, "Imagination," 2014, 342–343.

24 Gutas, "Imagination," 2014, 341; citing Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 159.

25 Mousavian and Mostafavi, "Avicenna," 74.

26 I have already addressed the question of the Imagination's (im)mortality in chapter 2; see p. 144n118.

In recent studies, Sebti and Noble have both referred to Mousavian and Mostafavi's study to support assertions that either the Imagination or the Estimation, or both, directly contact the supernal realm and receive information therefrom.[27] Sebti maintains Ibn Sīnā's distinction between two types of supernal knowledge and revelation, intellectual and imaginative. The intellect receives the former, while the Imagination receives the latter directly, rather than through the mediation of the practical intellect.[28] She later adds that "it appears, then, that the estimative [faculty], like the imagination and like the intellect, can receive 'information' from the souls of the celestial spheres."[29] Noble, meanwhile, finds in *Pointers* X.23 "strong support" for Mousavian and Mostafavi's interpretation.[30] Like Sebti, Noble asserts that "it is the estimative faculty that establishes connection with the supernal realm, receiving from it intentions—or *maʿānī*—in much the same way as the sheep perceives the intentions of the wolf."[31] Additionally, he observes that since Ibn Sīnā allows not only the prophet, but also "dull-witted, gullible youth" to receive information from the supernal realm, "it would seem that the practical intellect plays no role whatsoever" in that ability.[32]

The difficulty of maintaining this interpretation—namely, that the Imagination, Estimation, or both, directly contact and receive information from the souls of the celestial spheres—is that the textual evidence overwhelmingly does not support it. In certain passages, Ibn Sīnā may not be as clear or explicit as we would wish, but when examined together, his statements on this matter firmly establish that the practical intellect is what makes contact with the souls of the celestial spheres, through the assistance of the Estimation and Imagination.[33] I will present evidence for this over the course of section 2, and will summarize it at the end of the section.

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27 Sebti, *Avicenne*, 103n2. Sebti has maintained this position since long before Mousavian and Mostafavi's study. In an earlier essay, she observes that "Avicenna nowhere professes that the practical intellect is a cognitive power," the only exception being chapter XIII of *Lesser Destination*; "Distinction," 38n31. While at the time she considered that chapter's attribution to Ibn Sīnā doubtful, she now recognizes it as an "authentic testimony of the Avicennian doctrine of prophecy," albeit one characterized by certain inconsistencies with the rest of Ibn Sīnā's corpus; *Avicenne*, 33n1.

28 Sebti, *Avicenne*, 136.

29 Sebti, 233.

30 Noble, *Philosophising the Occult*, 186n38.

31 Noble, 186.

32 Noble, 188n41.

33 I am not the first to come to this conclusion; cf. Gutas, "Imagination," 2014; Michot, *Destinée*, 118–133.

2.2 *Empirical, Logical, and Philosophical Bases for Engravings from Above*

Ibn Sīnā starts laying the groundwork to prove Imaginative knowledge in **X.8**,[34] where he states, "Testing and Proving and syllogistic reasoning are in agreement that the human soul can obtain something from the Unseen in the state of sleep."[35] Likewise, "there is nothing preventing the occurrence of such an acquisition during the state of wakefulness, except that for which there is a path to its cessation and a possibility for its elimination."[36] As for Testing and Proving, Ibn Sīnā claims that this refers to widespread aural and visual witnessing (*al-tasāmuʿ* and *al-taʿāruf*) of such phenomena. In fact, he asserts that the only person who would not have experienced such phenomena is someone who has a bad humoral temperament and dormant faculties of Imagination and Memory. This aligns with his assertion in the De Anima of the *Cure* that "There is not one person who does not have a share of the phenomenon of [veridical] dreams and the state of attainments that happen while awake."[37]

Ibn Sīnā then reminds his reader of the relation between the supernal (celestial) and sublunar (earthly) realms (**X.9**).

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34 For a discussion of this and several of the following sections in the context of earlier Arabic accounts of veridical dreams, see Bennett, "Avicenna's Dreaming in Context."

35 *al-tajribatu wa-l-qiyāsu mutaṭābiqāni ʿalā anna li-l-nafsi l-insāniyyati an tanāla mina l-ġaybi naylam mā fī ḥāli l-manāmi*; *al-Išārāt*, X.8, 374.11–12. On the meaning and significance of "Testing and Proving" (*tajriba*) in Ibn Sīnā's epistemology, see Gutas, "The Empiricism of Avicenna," 44–46.

36 *fa-lā māniʿa ʿan an yaqaʿa miṯlu ḏālika l-nayli fī ḥāli l-yaqaẓati illā mā kāna ilā zawālihi sabīlun wa-li-rtifāʿihi imkānun*; *al-Išārāt*, X.8, 374.12–13. Cruz Hernández misidentifies what is being eliminated here: "Nothing impedes something similar from [also] occurring in the state of wakefulness, unless this gift is removed by some motive or [the soul] becomes disturbed;" *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 84. "Gift" is how Cruz Hernández understands *nayl* (acquisition). It is not the *nayl* that is being eliminated, however, but the impediment (*māniʿ*). Inati states that this exception is a reference to a person's preoccupation with sensible objects; *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 44. Goichon states the same, citing Ṭūsī's commentary; *Directives et remarques*, 506n3. Considering that Ibn Sīnā devoted significant effort in *Pointers* IX to discuss how intellectual training can allow the knower to divert his thought from lower, base things to loftier, noble things, this is a justifiable inference.

37 *wa-laysa aḥadun mina l-nāsi lā naṣība la-hu min amri l-ruʾyā wa-min ḥāli l-idrākāti llatī takūnu fī l-yaqaẓati*; *Avicenna's De Anima*, IV.2, 174.1–2.

ثمّ قد نُبِّهت لأنّ الأجرام السماويّة لها نفوس ذوات إدراكات جزئيّة وإرادات جزئيّة تصدر عن رأي جزئيّ ولا مانع لها عن تصوّر اللوازم الجزئيّة لحركاتها من الكائنات عنها في العالم العنصريّ

You have already been reminded that celestial bodies have souls that have particular attainments and particular wills which come forth from a particular notion, with nothing preventing them [the souls] from forming concepts—among the things that are generated in the [sublunar] world of elements—of the particular implicates of their particular motions.[38]

He adds that the celestial spheres have, in addition to separate intellects, rational souls in the same way that our bodies have rational souls. He refers to his theory of supernal beings knowing particulars in a universal way as "supernal wisdom" (*al-ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya*). Since the celestial souls are the causes of sublunar motions—and since the cause of something knows its effect—then the celestial souls are able to know the particulars in the sublunar realm.[39]

Ibn Sīnā addresses all of this in a comparable passage in the Metaphysics of the *Cure* and *Salvation*, saying,

والأمور الحادثة في هذا العالم تحدث من مصادمات القوى الفعّاليّة السماويّة ... وأمّا القوى السماويّة فتحدث عنها آثارها في هذه الأجرام التي تحتها على ثلاث وجوه أحدها من تلقائها بحيث لا تسبّب فيها للأمور الأرضيّة بوجه من الوجوه وتلك إمّا عن طبائع أجسامها وقواها الجسمانيّة بحسب التشكيلات الواقعة منها مع القوى الأرضيّة والمناسبات بينها وإمّا عن طبائعها النفسانيّة والوجه [الثالث] فيه شركة

Everything that comes to be in this world comes to be from the collisions of the active celestial forces ... The celestial forces' effects on bodies below them come about in three ways. One is through their own accord insofar as terrestrial things have no causal effect on them in any way. [The second] is either due to the natures of the [celestial] bodies and their corporeal forces in accordance with the configurations that occur due to them together with the terrestrial forces and the relations between them; or it is due to the natures of their souls. The [third] way is a certain sharing with the terrestrial states. They act as

38 *al-Išārāt*, x.9, 375.7–9. Translation is slightly modified from Gutas, "Avicenna's *al-ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya*," 4. Zārīʿī attributes this allusion to *Pointers* III (*takmila*), section 7, which discusses the souls of the celestial spheres having a particular will; *al-Išārāt*, 375, in a footnote marked with an asterisk.

39 For a thorough discussion of the conceptual and lexical difficulties in this section, along with its interpretation by pre-modern commentators and modern scholars, see Gutas, "Avicenna's *al-ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya*."

ما مع الأحوال الأرضيّة وتسبّب بوجه من الوجوه على الوجه الذي أقول إنّه قد اتّضح لك أنّ لنفوس تلك الأجرام السماويّة ضرباً من التصرّف في المعاني الجزئيّة على سبيل إدراك غير عقليّ محض وأنّ لمثلها أن يتوصّل إلى إدراك الحادثات الجزئيّة وذلك يمكن بسبب إدراك تفاريق أسبابها الفاعلة والقابلة الحاصلة من حيث هي أسباب وما يتأدّى إليه

a cause in a certain manner, on which I say: It has become clear to you that the souls of these celestial bodies have a certain kind of management over the particular notions by way of an attainment that is not purely intellectual. [And it has become clear to you] that the likes of them [the celestial souls] are able to arrive at an attainment of particular occurrences. That is possible due to an attainment of their various active and receptive causes that occur—insofar as they [the celestial beings] are causes—and of that to which they lead [effects].[40]

Ibn Sīnā next exhorts (**x.10**) his reader not to deny that a rational soul with the proper predisposition and preparation (*isti'dād*) can be engraved (*yantaqiš*) with knowledge from the supernal realm, i.e., the realm of the Unseen (*al-ġayb*).[41] The language that he uses here is similar to the metaphors—imprinting and impression (*inṭibā'* and *irtisām*, respectively)—that he uses to describe this process in other works.[42]

40 *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, x.1, 359.9–360.3; *al-Najāt*, 334.25–335.12.

41 As is his habit in this chapter, Ibn Sīnā exhorts his reader to not deny the veracity of what he is saying: "*Do not* deny that part of the Unseen can be engraved in it [the rational soul] from its realm, commensurate with its [the soul's] preparation and the disappearance of the obstacle" (*fa-lā tastankiranna an yakūna ba'ḍu l-ġaybi yantaqišu fī-hā min 'ālamihi bi-ḥasabi l-isti'dādi wa-zawāli l-ḥā'il*); *al-Išārāt*, x.10, 376.7. Goichon's translation misconstrues the verb *yantaqiš* as active, mistakenly portraying the rational soul as a passive recipient of this engraving: "Do not in any way ignore that certain invisible beings engrave in your soul something of their world;" *Directives et remarques*, 509. Cruz Hernández completely ignores this sentence, presenting only a truncated version of this section in his translation, which bears little correspondence to the original text: "You know well that it is fitting for you to know the figure of this [intelligible] world according to what shall happen and occur in what changes [in the sensible world]. But I want to add an observation for you;" *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 86. His translation reproduces an error in Goichon's, which reads *zawāl al-ḥā'il* as "the disappearance of what changes," not recognizing that in this case *ḥā'il* means obstacle and that the phrase is an allusion to *kāna ilā zawālihi* [*al-māni'*] *sabīlun* in x.8.

42 See, for example: "As for the theoretical faculty, it is a faculty whose nature it is to be imprinted with universal forms which have been abstracted from matter" (*wa-ammā l-quwwatu l-naẓariyyatu fa-hiya quwwatun min ša'nihā an tanṭabi'a bi-l-ṣuwari l-kulliyyati l-mujarradati 'ani l-māddati*); *Avicenna's De Anima*, I.5, 48.1–2. "The Imagery [*al-ḫayāl*] cannot function except that an imaginative form be impressed in it in a body in a manner

2.3 *Distracting the Faculties of the Soul*

He next addresses the various circumstances in which faculties of the soul can be distracted from performing their proper functions (**X.11**).

القوى النفسانيّة متجاذبة متنازعة فإذا هاج الغضب شغل النفس عن الشهوة وبالعكس وإذا تجرّد الحسّ الباطن لعمله شغل عن الحسّ الظاهر فيكاد لا يسمع ولا يرى وبالعكس وإذا انجذب الحسّ الباطن إلى الحسّ الظاهر أمال العقلَ إليه فانبتّ دون حركته الفكريّة التي يفتقر فيها كثيراً إلى آلته

Faculties of the soul are mutually attracting and mutually competing. When the [faculty of] ire is roused, it distracts the soul from [attending to] the appetite, and vice versa. When the internal senses are occupied exclusively with their activity, they distract [the soul] from the external senses, and so [one] can hardly hear and see, and vice versa. When the internal senses are attracted to the external senses, they [internal senses] make the intellect incline toward them [external senses], thereby cutting the intellect off from its cognitive movement, with regard to which it is in great need of its instrument.[43]

This passage presents both philological and philosophical challenges. First, the philological. Where I read *amāla l-ʿaqla ilay-hi*, Zāriʿī reads *amāla l-ʿaqla ālatuhu* ("the intellect's instrument causes it to incline"); or, alternatively—since Zāriʿī does not employ a short vowel to indicate how to read the passage—, *amāla l-ʿaqla ālatahu* ("[the senses] cause the intellect to incline toward its instrument"). Since Zāriʿī does not identify which manuscript witness served as his exemplar, and since he uses a negative critical apparatus, determining the source of his reading is difficult. That being said, it must have been a commentary (by Rāzī or Ṭūsī);[44] he consulted two *Pointers* manuscripts con-

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that is shared between it and the body" (*fa-inna l-ḥayāla lā yumkinuhu an yataḥayyala illā an tartasima l-ṣūratu l-ḥayāliyyatu fī-hi fī jismin irtisāman muštarakan bayna-hu wa-bayna l-jismi*); IV.3, 188.14–16. "The Common Sense … receives in itself all of the forms which have been imprinted in the five [internal] senses and brought from them to it" (*al-ḥissu l-muštaraku … taqbulu bi-ḏātihā jamīʿa l-ṣuwari l-munṭabiʿati fī l-ḥawāssi l-ḫamsi muta'ddiyatan ilay-hi min-hu*); *al-Najāt*, 201.18–19.

43 *al-Išārāt*, X.11, 376.10–377.1.

44 Najafzādih's edition of Rāzī's commentary reads *amāla l-ʿaqla ālatuhu*; Rāzī, *Šarḥ*, 2:643.8. For discussion of Rāzī's commentary on this passage, and its relation to his theory of uncommon powers, see Noble, *Philosophising the Occult*, 176–177. Noble reads this passage, against Zāriʿī, as *amāla l-ʿaqla ālatahu*. Āmulī's edition of Ṭūsī's commentary appears

taining Book II, and both provide a different reading.[45] Among the witnesses that he used, only a manuscript of Ṭūsī's commentary attests to *amāla l-ʿaqla ilay-hi*.[46] Forget, however, who did adopt *amāla l-ʿaqla ilay-hi*, provides a witness of the *Pointers* that does attest to it.[47] The corruption from *ilay-hi* to *ālatahu* is quite simple, as they share the same *rasm*: الله. Given the directional meaning associated with the root *m-y-l*, reading الله as إليه is the natural choice. Additionally, the appearance of آلته in the following sentence may have led some to read the prior إليه as آلته.

As for the philosophical challenge, it begins with Ṭūsī and was later perpetuated by Goichon, who relies heavily on Ṭūsī's commentary in her translation and interpretation of the *Pointers*. Goichon, who used Forget's edition for her translation, also follows his reading of *amāla l-ʿaqla ilay-hi*: "When the internal sense is dragged toward the external sense, it inclines the intellect toward the latter and, as a result, it is cut off from its [proper] movement for which it has a great need for its instrument, [thought]."[48] Goichon adds in a footnote, "The intellect's instrument 'in its intellectual movement' is thought. This is what is being dragged along, as a result of which the intellect finds itself inclined."[49] This, however, is clearly not what Ibn Sīnā is saying. To justify her interpretation and translation, Goichon points to Ṭūsī's commentary, which reads: "The attraction makes cogitation [= thought], which is the intellect's instrument in its intellectual motion, the agent that inclines the intellect toward the external [senses]."[50] Inati arrives at the same conclusion, translating this passage as "Hence, if the internal senses are lured to the external senses, the intellect will be turned by its instrument toward the external senses and will, therefore, be

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to read *amāla* [*al-injiḏābu*] *l-ʿaqla ālatahu*. I say "appears" because Āmulī left the passage unvocalized, but indicates *injiḏāb* with a footnote after *al-ʿaql*; Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ*, 2:1116.7.

45 The other reading is "[the senses] cause the intellect to deviate toward it" (*aḍalla l-ʿaqla ilay-hi*), found in MS Tehran Majlis-i Šūrā-yi Islāmī 5085 (siglum *alif*) and MS Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-Marʿašī al-Najafī 6525 (siglum *dāl*); *al-Išārāt*, 367n12.

46 MS Āyat Allāh al-Gulpāygānī 26/104 (siglum *ṭā'*); 376n12. Valuable as this is, we cannot rely primarily on evidence from a *lemma* in a commentary to establish the proper reading of the source text.

47 Forget notes that, all things being equal, he preferred the oldest reading when faced with variants. For his edition, this was Leiden MS 1020a (siglum A), which allegedly dates to 408AH. Since Forget lists only variant readings in his apparatus, I infer that MS 1020a attests to *amāla l-ʿaqla ilay-hi*; Forget, *Le livre des théorèmes*, 211 note d.

48 Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 509. The brackets encompassing "proper" and "thought" are original to Goichon's translation.

49 Goichon, 509n2.

50 *jaʿala l-injiḏābu l-fikra llaḏī huwa ālatu l-ʿaqli fī ḥarakatihi l-ʿaqliyyati mumīlan li-l-ʿaqli naḥwa l-ẓāhiri*; Ṭūsī, *Šarḥ*, 2:1117.5.

cut off from its cognitive movement in which the intellect often has need for its instrument."[51] Whereas Goichon sees the senses as what inclines the intellect toward themselves, for Inati it is the intellect's instrument that inclines it toward the senses. This implies that she follows Dunyā in reading *amāla l-ʿaqla ālatuhu*.[52] Despite this disagreement, both understand thought/cogitation as the intellect's instrument. But to read thought or cogitation—both terms translating the Arabic *fikr*, which appears not in the *Pointers* but in Ṭūsī's commentary—as the intellect's instrument in its *cogitative motion* (*ḥarakatihi l-fikriyyati*) leads to a confused tautology: cogitation is the intellect's instrument in its cogitation.

Complicating matters further is Ibn Sīnā's emphatic declaration in *Pointers* VII.2 that the intellect functions on its own, not by means of an instrument. As we have seen, he stresses this not only in *Pointers*, but also in *Elements*, *Guidance*, *Lesser Destination*, *Cure*, and *Salvation*. How can the intellect function without an instrument, but also have an instrument? To make sense of this, we must recall the rational soul's two facets and their two functions: 1) the theoretical intellect, whose proper function is intellection, or thinking the intelligibles by making contact with the active intellect; and 2) the practical intellect, whose function is to manage the body prudently. The theoretical intellect is associated with things immaterial and intelligible, while the practical intellect is associated with things material and sensible.[53]

The theoretical intellect requires no instrument to acquire and think the intelligibles, but it does need the aid of the Imagination to translate intelligibles into sensible data so that they may be stored and transmitted.[54] Additionally, the practical intellect needs an instrument when it attends to sensible data and the forms of particular events received from the souls of the celestial spheres. In fact, it has two instruments when it deals with sensibles: the Estimation (*wahm*) and Imagination (*taḫayyul*). Elsewhere, Ibn Sīnā is clear on this. In *Salvation*, he states that the Estimation "is an instrument for the intellect when it

51 Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 96.

52 Dunyā (1968), *al-Išārāt*, 4:126.6–7. Dunyā does not provide a critical apparatus or indicate variant readings.

53 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XIII, 117; trans. in Gutas, "Imagination," 2014, 342.

54 As Gutas points out, when it comes to the theoretical intellect, the Imagination aids it not in intellection but in translating the intelligibles into sensible data that can then be communicated and stored; "Imagination," 2014, 344. In *Lesser Destination*, Ibn Sīnā says that the practical intellect "uses" (*tastaʿmil*) the Estimation and Imagination, but does not call them the intellect's instruments. He repeats the passage in the *Cure* (slightly altered) and *Salvation*; *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, II, 63.8–9; *Avicenna's De Anima*, I.15, 46.5–7; *al-Najāt*, 202.21–22.

comes to sensibles."[55] In *Philosophy*, he remarks, "The human soul makes contact with the spiritual realm and the souls of the angelic substances … through the faculty of Imagination, which is its instrument in this activity. [It] helps the [rational] soul in making contact with the supernal [realm]."[56] The souls of the angelic substances (the celestial spheres) possess knowledge of past, present, and future events in the sensible realm of generation and corruption.[57] The instrument that Ibn Sīnā is referring to in X.11 is the Cogitative faculty (*al-quwwa al-mufakkira*), which is the name that he typically applies to the Imagination when the intellect employs it.[58] When the intellect directs itself toward the supernal realm, it employs the Estimative and Cogitative faculties to translate and convey the data that it receives.

Having now clarified what Ibn Sīnā means by the intellect's instrument, we see that he echoes the main thrust of *Pointers* X.11 in the De Anima of the *Cure*:

The soul's being occupied with one of these [faculties] diverts it from aiding another faculty in its function, or from controlling it [when] it deviates from [its function], or from returning it to [its] proper [function]. It is of the soul's nature to neglect to confirm external matters when it is occupied with internal matters … and to neglect to employ the internal faculties when it is occupied with external [matters] … Whenever it applies itself to the

اشتغال النفس ببعض هذه يصرفها عن إعانة القوى الأخرى على فعلها أو عن ضبطها عن زيغها أو عن حملها على الصواب فإنّ من شأن النفس إذا اشتغلت بالأمور الباطنة أن تغفل عن استثبات الأمور الخارجة … وإذا اشتغلت بالأمور الخارجة أن تغفل عن استعمال القوى الباطنة … وإذا انصبّت إلى أفعال القوّة الشهوانيّة

55 *huwa ālatun li-l-ʿaqli fī l-maḥsūsāti*; *al-Najāt*, 99.21–23; cf. trans. in Griffel, "Al-Ghazālī's Use of 'Original Human Disposition,'" 21; and Ahmed, *Avicenna's Deliverance: Logic*, 91.

56 *payvand yāftan-i jān-i mardum bi-ʿālam-i rūḥānī va jānhā-yi faraštih-yi gawhar … az quvvat-i taḫayyul kih ālat-i wīst andarīn kār … nafs rā yārī kunad bi-payvand-i zabar*; *Dānišnāma*, Ṭabīʿiyyāt, 135.3–8; cf. trans. in Achena and Massé, *Le Livre de science*, II, 84; citation found in Gutas, "Imagination," 2014, 344. Ibn Sīnā also refers to the Imagination as the intellect's instrument in *Provenance and Destination* (passage cited below, re: *Pointers* X.14).

57 In the *Provenance and Destination*, Ibn Sīnā confusingly states that the practical intellect's contact with the souls of the celestial spheres "comes about on the part of the Estimation and Imagination," rather than saying they are the intellect's instruments; Gutas, "Imagination," 2014, 339. I return to this in section 2.7.

58 *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 38.21–39.3. Inati uses more precise terminology in her analysis of the text, where she correctly identifies the Imagination as the intellect's tool; *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 48. Unlike Ṭūsī, Rāzī clearly identifies the faculty in question as the *mufakkira*; Rāzī, *Šarḥ*, 2:643.16. It is possible, of course, that Ṭūsī did refer to *al-mufakkira* and not the etymologically related *al-fikr*, but we cannot know this with certainty without a critical edition of his commentary.

انكسرت منها أفعال القوّة الغضبيّة وإذا انصبّت إلى أفعال القوّة الغضبيّة انكسرت منها أفعال القوّة الشهوانيّة

appetitive faculty, it lacks the power [to control] the activities of the irascible faculty. And whenever it applies itself to the activities of the irascible faculty, it lacks the power [to control] the activities of the appetitive faculty.[59]

When such internal senses are drawn to the external senses, they can drag the intellect along with them, interrupting the intellect's cogitative motions by directing its attention away from its instrument (the Imagination as Cogitative faculty, *al-mufakkira*) and toward the external senses. Meanwhile, the rational soul is attracted toward strong movement, and away from the activities which it alone is capable of doing. It is a well-known fact, Ibn Sīnā says elsewhere, that the soul's being occupied with the lower realm hinders it from attending to the higher realm, and vice versa.[60] As such, Ibn Sīnā concludes this section of the *Pointers* by saying that "whenever the soul seeks to command the subdual of the internal senses under its management, the external senses also weaken, and what is relied upon [sensory data] does not lead from them to the soul."[61]

Ibn Sīnā next addresses the role of the Common Sense (*al-ḥiss al-muštarak*) (**x.12**). Whenever something is engraved in the Common Sense, it becomes like an actually Experienced object (*mušāhad*), regardless of whether the sensible object endures or disappears.

الحسّ المشترك هو لوح النقش الذي إذا تمكّن منه صار النقش في حكم المشاهد وربّما زال الناقش الحسّيّ عن الحسّ وبقيت صورته هُنَيْهَةً في الحسّ المشترك فبقي في حكم المشاهد دون المتوهّم وليُحْضِر ذكرُك ما قيل لك في أمر القطر النازل خطّاً مستقيماً وانتقاش النقطة الجوّالة محيط دائرة فإذا تمثّلت الصورة في لوح الحسّ المشترك صارت مشاهدةً سواء كان في ابتداء

The Common Sense is the board of engraving. When it [engraving] seizes control of it [the board], the engraving becomes like the actually Experienced thing. At times the sensible thing that causes the engraving disappears from the [external] senses, but its form remains for a little while in the Common Sense. Therefore, it remains like the actually Experienced thing without becoming an object of the faculty of Estimation. Let your Memory bring to the fore what has been said to you concerning the matter of the drops

59 *Avicenna's De Anima*, IV.2, 170.17–171.5.

60 *wa-mina l-maʿlūmi anna štiġāli l-nafsi bi-l-jānibi l-adnā yaṣudduhu ʿani l-jānibi l-ʿalā kamā anna iqbālahi ʿalā l-jānibi l-ʿalā yaṣudduhu ʿani l-jānibi l-asfali*; "*Commentary on the* Theology of Aristotle," 41.13–15.

61 *wa-iḍā stamkanati l-nafsu min ḍabṭi l-ḥissi l-bāṭini taḥta taṣarrufihā ḫārati l-ḥawāssu l-ẓāhiratu ayḍan wa-lam yataʾadda ʿan-hā ilā l-nafsi mā yuʿtaddu bi-hi*; *al-Išārāt*, X.11, 377.4–5.

[of rain water] that descend in a straight line and [concerning] the engraving of the point which moves about as the circumference of a circle. When the form is represented in the board of the Common Sense, it becomes an actually Experienced thing, whether it is in the beginning of the state of being impressed in it from an external sensible object, or its continuing together with the endurance of the sensible object, or its fixedness after the disappearance of the sensible object, or its occurring in it but not from a sensible object, if such is possible.[62]

حال ارتسامها فيه من المحسوس الخارج أو بقائها مع بقاء المحسوس أو ثباتها بعد زوال المحسوس أو وقوعها فيه لا من قبل المحسوس إن أمكن

Ibn Sīnā introduced this example earlier in the *Pointers*, emphasizing that seeing a point moving rapidly in circular motion as a circle rather than a point happens via direct Experience—meaning the forms' impression in the Common Sense—rather than solely from the workings of Imagination (*taḫayyul*) or Memory (*taḏakkur*).[63] He explains this process in similar terms, albeit without referring to the concept of direct Experience (*mušāhada*), in the De Anima of the *Cure*.

62 X.12, 377.7–14. Goichon, and Cruz Hernández following her, translate *mušāhad*(*a*) as "intuition" or "intuitively apprehended," needlessly giving a patina of non- or supra-rationalism to what, for Ibn Sīnā, is a very rational method of observing objects in the mental and extra-mental worlds; Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 510; Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 87.

63 "You know that only the form of the object opposite it [vision] is imprinted in [the faculty of] vision. The object opposite [vision] that is descending or moving in a circle is like a point, not like a line. There remains, therefore, in one of your faculties the figuration of what is imprinted in it first, to which is connected the figuration from the present vision. You have a faculty prior to visual perception to which vision leads, like direct Experience. The sensibles come together in this [faculty], which then attains them. And you have a faculty that preserves likenesses of these sensibles collected in it after they disappear" (*wa-anta taʿlamu anna l-baṣara inna-ma tartasimu fī-hi ṣuratu l-muqābili wa-l-muqābilu l-nāzilu awi l-mustadīru ka-l-nuqṭati lā ka-l-ḫaṭṭi fa-qad baqiya iḏan fī baʿḍi quwāka hayʾatu mā rtasama fī-hi awwalan wa-ttaṣala bi-hā hayʾatu l-ibṣāri l-ḥāḍiri fa-ʿinda-ka quwwatun qabla l-baṣari ilay-hā yuʾaddī l-baṣaru ka-l-mušāhadati wa-ʿinda-hā tajtamiʿu l-maḥsūsātu fa-tudrikuhā wa-ʿinda-ka quwwatun taḥfaẓu muṯula l-maḥsūsāti baʿda l-ġaybūbati mujtamiʿatan fī-hā*); *al-Išārāt*, III.9, 239.10–240.1. Inati misinterprets some of the language and content in this passage: "There remains, therefore, in some of your powers the form of that which was first represented in vision; the present visual form is [then] conveyed to these powers;" *Physics and Metaphysics*, 100. The phrase *fī*

The Imagination is able, at that point, to have influence over and draw near to the Imagery.[64] It puts it to use, their combined force growing stronger together. The Imagery becomes most actual [at this point]. The forms that are in the Imagery appear in the Common Sense. They are seen as if they exist externally because the trace attained from what appears from the external [world] and from what appears from the internal [world] is what is represented in it [the Common Sense].[65]

أمكن التخيّل حينئذ أن يقوى ويقبل على المصوّرة ويستعملها ويتقوّى اجتماعهما معاً فتصير المصوّرة أظهر فعلاً فتلوح الصور التي في المصوّرة في الحاسّ المشترك فترى كأنّها موجودة خارجاً لأنّ الأثر المدرك من الوارد من خارج ومن الوارد من داخل هو ما يتمثّل فيه

Ibn Sīnā discusses this topic—and adduces the same examples as in the *Pointers*—in greater detail in an earlier passage in the De Anima of the *Cure*. In order to differentiate between the function of the external senses and the Common Sense, he tells his reader:

Consider the state of the water droplet that descends from rain and is seen as a straight line, and the state of something straight that is moving in a circle, the point of which is seen as a circle. It is not possible for the thing to be attained as a line or a circle unless it is seen repeatedly. The external senses cannot see it twice, but rather see it as it is. But, when it is impressed in the Common Sense and [its presence to the external senses] ceases before the image is effaced from the Common Sense, the external sense attains it as it is, while the Common Sense attains it as what it was [at

فتأمّلْ حال القطر التي تنزل من المطر فترى خطّاً مستقيماً وحال الشيء المستقيم الذي يدور فيرى طرفه دائرةً ولا يمكن أن يدرك الشيء خطّاً أو دائرةً إلّا ويرى فيه مراراً والحسّ الظاهر لا يمكن أن يراه مرّتين بل يراه حيث هو لكنه إذا ارتسم في الحسّ المشترك وزال قبل أن تمحي الصورة من الحسّ المشترك أدركه الحسّ الظاهر حيث هو وأدركه الحسّ المشترك كأنّه كائن حيث كان فيه وكائن حيث صار إليه فرأى

ba'ḍi quwāka refers to a singular faculty, not faculties, as indicated by the masculine singular resumptive pronoun in *irtasama fī-hi*. The original (and now past) figuration is imprinted in this faculty. The current figuration is then connected to that first figuration (*ittaṣala bi-hā*), not "conveyed to the visual powers." Ibn Sīnā is describing a process in which multiple images are stitched together, the cumulative effect of which allows our mind to perceive as a straight (or circular) line what our sight perceives only as discrete images of a single drop as it falls (or rotates).

64 "Form-bearing faculty" (*al-muṣawwira*) is another name that Ibn Sīnā used for the Imagery (*al-ḫayāl*).

65 *Avicenna's De Anima*, IV.2, 172.17–173.2.

امتداداً مستديراً أو مستقيماً وذلك لا يمكن أن ينسب إلى الحسّ الظاهر البتّة وأمّا المصوّرة فتدرك الأمرين وتتصوّرهما وإن بطل الشيء وغاب

one moment] and as what it becomes [in another moment]. Thus, it sees [the point of the straight line or the single droplet as] an extension that is circular or straight, and that cannot be attributed to the external sense at all. As for the Imagery,[66] it attains the two things and gives them form, even if the thing ceases and becomes absent.[67]

In this passage, Ibn Sīnā elucidates the Common Sense's role as arbiter of sensory data received from the external senses. The external senses—in this case, vision—are capable only of attaining sensible objects as they are in a single moment.[68] They have no means of preserving perceptions of a sensible object from a prior moment and combining them with perceptions from a later moment. When this sensory data is transferred to the Common Sense, the image (*ṣūra*) of the sensible object is impressed in it. If the image of the sensible object as it exists in moment A is still present when the image of the object in moment B is impressed—and likewise for moments C, D, etc.—then the combination of these images allows what is in fact a single rain drop falling from the sky to be perceived as a straight line. The Imagination (*al-mutaḫayyila*, *al-taḫayyul*) is what combines these disparate images. The images' impression in the Common Sense leads to direct Experience of them, namely experiencing a mental object—a falling rain drop as a straight a line—as if it were an extra-mental object.[69]

66 This passage from *De Anima* I.5 is somewhat incongruent with the passage just quoted from *De Anima* IV.2. Although Ibn Sīnā uses the term *al-muṣawwira* ("Form-bearing" faculty—which Ibn Sīnā also called *ḫayāl*, "Imagery"), it is clear that the faculty in question must be the Imagination (*al-mutaḫayyila*, *al-taḫayyul*). The Form-bearing faculty/Imagery is merely a passive storehouse. It does not partake in separating and combining forms, which is the function proper to the Imagination. In *Provenance and Destination*, there is a similar example of Ibn Sīnā's referring to Imagination with the term for Imagery. Gutas suggests that, at that stage, Ibn Sīnā had not yet developed his mature terminology. Although he wrote the *Cure* roughly a decade after *Provenance and Destination*, it seems he still was not fully consistent with the terms for these faculties; Gutas, "Intellect," 2014, 8n19.

67 *Avicenna's De Anima*, I.5, 44.13–45.2. This passage and the comparable passage in *Pointers* III.9 both occur when Ibn Sīnā introduces the internal faculties of attainment (*quwā l-idrāk*).

68 On Ibn Sīnā's theory of vision, particularly his criticism of the extramission theory, see McGinnis, *Avicenna*, 107–110; and Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler*, 43–52.

69 Kaukua interprets Ibn Sīnā's purpose in the examples of the falling rain drop and rotating

While the above examples pertain to forms of external, sensible objects engraved in the Common Sense, Ibn Sīnā states that there are other cases in which forms may be sensed as being externally present, even though there is no extra-mental sensible object; this occurs with certain ill and bilious people (**x.13**).[70] This occurrence is due to either an internal cause or something that has an effect on an internal cause. The cause could be either the faculties of Imagination or Estimation, for Ibn Sīnā states that their contents can be engraved in the Common Sense. Recall from above that the contents of the Imagination are forms or images (sg. *ṣūra*), which are stored in the Imagery (*al-ḫayāl*), while the contents of the Estimation are connotational attributes (sg. *maʿnā*), which are stored in the Memory (*al-ḏikr*). Similarly, what appears to the Common Sense can be engraved in the contents of these faculties. Ibn Sīnā likens this to two mirrors facing each other.

Having introduced these types of engravings, Ibn Sīnā discusses two preoccupations—one external and one internal—that may prohibit them from occurring (**x.14**). In the first case, an external sensory object distracts the Common Sense from anything other than it. In the second, an internal object of the intellect or Estimation takes hold of the Imagination to the point that it abandons its normal functioning.

وعقليّ باطن أو وهميّ باطن يضبط التخيّل عن الاعتمال متصرّفاً فيه بما يعنيه فيشغل بالإذعان له عن التسلّط على الحسّ المشترك فلا يتمكّن من النقش فيه لأنّ حركته ضعيفة لأنّها تابعة لا متبوعة

An internal [preoccupation], intellectual or Estimative, takes hold of the Imagination at the expense of [its normal] functioning, administering it with what interests it. Due to its submission to [the distraction], [the Imagination] is diverted from controlling the Common Sense. It is unable to engrave in it because its motion is weak and because it [the Imagination's motion] is following rather than being followed.[71]

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point as to explain how we experience time or duration; see his discussion in "Avicenna on the Soul's Activity in Perception," 102–104.

70 Ibn Sīnā addresses this in more detail in the *Provenance and Destination*, relevant passages of which are translated in the discussion of x.19 below. On perceiving things that are not really there, see Alwishah, "Avicenna on Perception, Cognition, and Mental Disorders: The Case of Hallucination."

71 *al-Išārāt*, x.14, 378.12–14. I, along with Inati and Goichon, read *mutaṣarrifan* as modifying the implied *šāġil*, whereas Noble reads it as modifying the Imagination: the distraction "seizes control of the imagination …, preventing it from acting autonomously on it [i.e., the common sense] with that which assists it [i.e., either the intellect or the estimative

In this case, the Imagination cannot render the Common Sense under its control, which prevents it from engraving anything upon it. Only when one of these two distractions disappears and the other is weak can the Imagination regain control over the Common Sense and resume engraving forms. This is one of two distractions to the Imagination that Ibn Sīnā describes in *Provenance and Destination*:

والثاني فوقه وهو العقل فإنّ العقل لا يمكّن الخيالَ من الاشتغال بفعله الخاصّ لاستعماله إياه آلةً لنفسه دائماً وبهذا لا يتمكّن التخيّل من الإقبال على الصور غير الموجودة

The second [distraction comes from] above it, it being the intellect. The intellect does not enable the Imagination to occupy itself with its proper function because it always seeks to employ it as an instrument for itself. Due to this, the Imagination is unable to draw near to forms that are not present [extra-mentally].[72]

Ibn Sīnā then transitions from discussing distractions of the internal senses to distractions of the external senses (**x.15**). An obvious distraction to the external senses, he says, is sleep.[73] However, it also acts as a distraction to the rational soul, causing it to redirect its focus from its primary, intellectual functions to aiding the natural processes within the body, such as digestion.[74] Here, Ibn

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faculty]." Inati and Goichon also read "assists" (*yuʿīnuhu*)—which appears in Forget and Dunyā—over "interests" (*yaʿnīhi*). Inati's translation, which is similar to Goichon's, reads, "managing it [Imagination] by means of this preoccupation's assistants." She identifies the assistants as the objects of the intellect or Estimation. While this is plausible, "interests" (*yaʿnī*) presents the *lectio dificilior*; Inati, *Physics and Metaphysics*, 98; Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 511; Noble, *Philosophising the Occult*, 179; Dunyā (1968), *al-Išārāt*, 4:131.7; Forget, *Le livre des théorèmes*, 312.14.

72 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, 111.17, 118.2–4.

73 Ibn Sīnā characterizes sleep and wakefulness as: "Wakefulness is the state in which the [rational] soul puts the senses or the external, motive faculties to use according to its volition, which it [does not do] out of necessity. Sleep is the absence of this state. In [sleep], the [rational] soul has turned away from the external side to the internal side" (*inna l-yaqaẓata ḥālatun takūnu l-nafsu fī-hā mustaʿmilatan li-l-ḥawāssi aw li-l-quwā l-muḥarrikati min ẓāhirin bi-l-irādati llatī lā ḍarūrata ilay-hā fa-yakūnu l-nawmu ʿadama hāḍihi l-ḥāli fa-takūnu l-nafsu fī-hi qad ʿaraḍat ʿani l-jihati l-ḫārijati ilā l-jihati l-dāḫilati*); *Avicenna's De Anima*, IV.2, 181.6–9.

74 *al-Išārāt*, X.15, 379.4. The Arabic reads, "It distracts the essence of the soul *fī l-aṣli*" (*wa-qad yašġalu ḏāta l-nafsi ayḍan fī l-aṣli*). Inati translates this as, "it may also primarily preoccupy the essence of the soul;" *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 98. Goichon translates this as, "it occupies the soul, itself, in its bottom;" *Directives et remarques*, 512. Neither seems to know what is meant by *fī l-aṣl*. I suggest that we should understand *fī l-aṣl* as a reference to the primary or essential function of the rational soul, which is to contemplate the intelligibles. As Ibn

Sīnā reminds his reader that when the soul is fully attentive to its intellectual functions—and therefore neglectful of everything else—it inhibits the natural functions that occur in the body. Since the conditions that obtain during sleep resemble those that obtain during illness more than they do those that obtain during good health, the soul must have some sort of inclination to aid the natural processes during sleep.[75] When the rational soul is diverted to aiding the body's natural functions, an opportunity arises for the Imagination to take over and "make engravings of the Imagination appear in [the Common Sense] as actually Experienced objects."[76] We can compare this to a passage in the De Anima of the *Cure*, where Ibn Sīnā states,

وإذا كانت القوّة المتخيّلة في النوم في مثل هذا الوقت غير مشغولة بالبدن ولا مقطوعة عن الحافظة والمصوّرة بل متمكّنة منهما فبالحرى أن تحسن خدمتها للنفس في ذلك لأنّها تحتاج لا محالة فيما يرد عليها من ذلك أن ترتسم صورته في هذه القوى ارتساماً صالحاً

Whenever the Imagination is, during sleep, in the likes of this moment, neither distracted by the body nor cut off from the Memory or the Imagery, but rather is dominant over them, it is apt to be of good service to the [rational] soul in that, because certainly it needs, with regard to what reaches it of that, its form to be imprinted correctly in these faculties.[77]

This is how during sleep one has visions as if one had actually experienced them. Ibn Sīnā reiterates (**x.16**), "Whenever an illness overcomes the principal body parts, the [rational] soul is completely attracted to the direction of [dealing with] the illness."[78] This is because sleep bears a resemblance to illness, and in both cases the assistance of the rational soul is needed to ensure the proper functioning of the body's natural processes. He continues,

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Sīnā explains here and in the passage from the De Anima of the *Cure* quoted in the preceding note, the rational soul is less able to do that during sleep because it has to assist in the continued functioning of the body's natural processes while the animal soul is unable to maintain them.

75 *fa-yakūnu mina l-ṣawābi l-ṭabīʿiyyi an yakūna li-l-nafsi njiḍābum mā ilā muẓāharati l-ṭabīʿati šāġilun ʿalā anna l-nawma ašbahu bi-l-maraḍi min-hu mina l-ṣiḥḥati*; *al-Išārāt*, x.15, 379.7–8. Inati misunderstands *muẓāharati l-ṭabīʿati* as "manifestations of nature" (*maẓāhir*?), rather than "aid;" *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 98.

76 *fa-lawwaḥat fī-hi l-nuqūša l-mutaḫayyalata mušāhadatan*; *al-Išārāt*, x.15, 379.10.

77 *Avicenna's De Anima*, iv.2, 180.14–18.

78 *wa-iḍā stawlā ʿalā l-aʿḍāʾi l-raʾīsati maraḍuni njaḍabati l-nafsu kulla l-injiḍābi ilā jihati l-maraḍi*; *al-Išārāt*, x.16, 379.13–14.

وشغلها ذلك عن الضبط الذي لها فضعف أحد الضابطين فلم يستنكر أن تلوح الصور المتخيّلة في لوح الحسّ المشترك لفتور أحد الضابطين

That [illness] distracts it [the rational soul] from the control that belongs to it. As such, one of the two controlling factors [the rational soul and external senses] is weakened. It is undeniable that forms of the Imagination appear in the board of the Common Sense on account of the abeyance of one of the controlling factors.[79]

This is also a reiteration of what he expresses in X.15, albeit in reference to illness instead of sleep. This is laying the groundwork for what Ibn Sīnā discusses below in X.18–19 and X.23 regarding the ability of the ill and the physically exhausted to catch a glimpse of the Unseen.

Ibn Sīnā observes, however, that the stronger the rational soul is, the less likely it is to be affected by contending attractions, or distracted by preoccupations; it is better able to remain in control (**X.17**). Likewise, the weaker it is, the more easily distracted it is, resulting in a lesser likelihood of it remaining in control.[80] In other words, when the rational soul is very strong, distractions like sleep, illness, or the internal or external senses are unlikely to divert it from its primary function of making contact with the supernal realm.

79 X.16, 379.14–380.2.

80 "The more that the [rational] soul is stronger in terms of its power, the less it is affected by the contending attractions, and the stronger is its control of the two sides. Whenever [the situation] is the reverse, the result is the reverse. Likewise, the more that the [rational] soul is stronger in terms of its power, the less it is preoccupied with distractions, and there remains a greater surplus from it [the soul's power] for the other side. So, whenever it is very strong, it is even stronger in this respect. Moreover, whenever it is well disciplined, its ability to guard itself against whatever counteracts training and its ability to administer what is proper to it is stronger" (*inna-hu kulla-mā kānati l-nafsu aqwā quwwatan kāna nfiʿāluhā ʿani l-mujāḍibāti aqalla wa-kāna ḍabṭuhā li-l-jānibayni ašadda wa-kulla-mā kānat bi-l-ʿaksi kāna ḍālika bi-l-ʿaksi wa-ka-ḍālika kulla-mā kānati l-nafsu aqwā quwwatan kāna štiġāluhā bi-l-šawāġili aqalla wa-kāna yafḍulu min-hā ʿani l-jānibi l-āḫari faḍlatun akṯaru fa-iḏā kānat šadīdata l-quwwati kāna hāḏā l-maʿnā fī-hā qawiyyan ṯumma iḏā kānat murtāḍatan kāna taḥaffuẓuhā ʿan muḍāddāti l-riyāḍati wa-taṣarrufuhā fī munāsibātihā aqwā*); X.17, 380.4–9. Goichon and Cruz Hernández misread the initial *kulla-mā* construction. In this case, it is not "whenever," but "the more … the more." Its second appearance, however, is the standard "whenever;" s.v. *kulla-mā* in Ullmann, *WKAS*, Band I, 295.

2.4 *Making Contact with the Supernal Realm*

Once again, Ibn Sīnā exhorts his reader to not consider it far-fetched that the rational soul experiences sudden, fleeting moments of escape (*falatāt*) from the Imagination when there are few sensory distractions. In these moments it arrives at the "side of sanctity" (i.e., the supernal realm), at which point the rational soul receives an engraving from the Unseen (**x.18**). This engraving then travels to the Imagination, after which it is engraved in the Common Sense. This can occur in the state of sleep, in certain illnesses, or after an abundance of physical exertion (cf. the Turkish soothsayer in x.23), all of which distract the senses and weaken the Imagination, thereby allowing the rational soul to predominate and follow its attraction to the loftier side.

When sensory distractions become fewer and there remain fewer distractions, it is not far-fetched for the [rational] soul to have fleeting moments in which it is free from the distraction of the Imagination and arrives at the side of sanctity. Something of the Unseen is then engraved in it. It then travels to the realm of the Imagination and is engraved in the Common Sense

وإذا قلّت الشواغل الحسّيّة وبقيت شواغل أقلّ لم يبعد أن تكون للنفس فلتات تخلص عن شغل التخيّل إلى جانب القدس فانتقش فيها نقش من الغيب فسلح إلى عالم التخيّل وانتقش في الحسّ المشترك

This occurs in the state of sleep or in the state of certain illnesses, which distracts the senses and weakens the Imagination, since illness can weaken the Imagination, as can an abundance of motion, due to the dissolution of the pneuma that is its instrument. It [Imagination] hurries to a certain rest and leisure, and the soul is easily attracted to the higher realm. When an engraving happens unexpectedly upon the soul, the Imagination is roused toward it and receives it as well. That is because of either a stimulus from that unexpectedly descending [engraving] and the Imagination's motion after its repose or its weakness, since it hastens to the likes of this stimulus; or, it is due to the rational soul's natural use of it, for it is among the soul's two aids when the likes of these thoughts appear

وهذا في حال النوم أو في حال مرضٍ ما يشغل الحسّ ويوهن التخيّل فإنّ التخيّل قد يوهنه المرض وقد توهنه كثرة الحركة لتحلّل الروح الذي هو آلته فيسرع إلى سكونٍ ما وفراغ فتنجذب النفس إلى الجانب الأعلى بسهولة فإذا طرأ على النفس نقش انزعج التخيّل إليه وتلقّاه أيضاً وذلك إمّا لمنبّه من هذا الطارئ وحركة التخيّل بعد استراحته أو وهنه فإنّه سريع إلى مثل هذا التنبّه وإمّا لاستخدام النفس النطقيّة له طبعاً فإنّه

من معاونيْ النفس عند أمثال هذه السوانح فإذا قبله التخيّل حال تزحزح الشواغل عنها انتقش في لوح الحسّ المشترك

[to the mind]. Whenever the Imagination receives it [engraving] when the distractions are withdrawn, it is engraved in the tablet of the Common Sense.[81]

Ibn Sīnā is aware of the apparent (but not real) contradiction here, namely that for the rational soul to make contact with the supernal realm, the Imagination must be in a weakened state; but upon making contact, the Imagination is then involved in engraving what is received in the Common Sense. He addresses this by stating that the unexpected receipt of an engraving naturally rouses the Imagination from repose or weakness; or, the rational soul, itself, rouses the Imagination because it needs its aid during these moments.[82]

Thus far, Ibn Sīnā has been discussing the rational soul's making fleeting contact with the supernal realm during sleep or illness, when it is better able to predominate. Nevertheless, he once more warns his reader that it is not far-fetched that, when the rational soul is strong, it will likewise take advantage of similar circumstances during a state of wakefulness (**x.19**).[83] He refers to the rational soul here as being in a state of "stealth and opportunity-taking." This context and language bear a strong similarity to a passage on prophecy in *Provenance and Destination*: "That part of him [the practical intellect] which *misses no opportunity* to come into contact with that [supernal realm] is abundant—it being possible for it [to effect this contact] also in the waking state—and the Imagination is pulled along with it and sees the truth and retains it."[84]

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81 *al-Išārāt*, x.18, 380.11–381.8. The decrease in distractions refers to a decrease in sensory distractions (*al-šawāġil al-ḥissiyya*), not a decrease in "sense perceptions," as Hughes translates it. This allows for sudden freedom not from the "work of the imagination," but from being distracted (*šaġl*) by it. The sudden contact with the supernal realm results not in "apprehensions of the invisible world," but in "something of the Unseen then [being] engraved in it" (*fa-ntaqaša fī-hā naqšun mina l-ġaybi*); Hughes, *The Texture of the Divine*, 95.

82 On the need for the rational soul to have control over the Imagination so that it does not distract it from its functions, see Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 157–160.

83 "When the [rational] soul's substance is strong and it has power over the mutually attracting sides, *it is not far-fetched* that there occurs to it this stealth and opportunity-taking in the state of waking" (*wa-iḏā kānati l-nafsu qawiyyata l-jawhari tasaʿu li-l-jawānibi l-mutajāḏibati lam yabʿud an yaqaʿa la-hā hāḏā l-ḫalsu wa-l-intihāzu ḥāla l-yaqaẓati*); *al-Išārāt*, x.19, 381.10–11. Cruz Hernández follows Goichon in interpreting Ibn Sīnā's use of the phrase *lam yabʿud* in a temporal sense as "rapidly;" Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 93; Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 514.

84 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, 111.18, 119.9–10 (emphasis added). The translation (slightly modified) is from Gutas, "Imagination," 2014, 339. For the Arabic, see page 163.

In this circumstance, the trace from the supernal realm may not be fully engraved in the Common Sense. At other times (**X.19**), however,

استولى الأثر فأشرق في الخيال إشراقاً واضحاً واغتصب الخيال لوح الحسّ المشترك إلى جهته فرسم ما انتقش فيه لا سيّما والنفس الناطقة مظاهرة له غير صارفة عنه مثل ما قد يفعله التوهّم في المرض والممرورين

The trace takes hold and shines a clear light in the Imagery, and the Imagery[85] forcefully draws the tablet of the Common Sense to its side and sketches what was engraved in it, especially while the rational soul aids it and does not turn away from it,[86] like what the Estimation does in the case of the ill and the bilious.[87]

In this case, the trace becomes an actually Experienced and seen object, or a voice that is heard but the source of which remains unseen, or something similar.

In elaborating the circumstances in which the rational soul takes advantage of an opportunity to make contact with the supernal realm, Ibn Sīnā provides as an example the case of the ill or bilious. While he mentions this quality of the bilious on two occasions (here in X.19 and earlier in X.13), he does so in a cursory manner, as is typical of his style in the *Pointers*. He is more expansive in the *Provenance and Destination*, where he states,

فيتّفق للممرورين شيء من الإنذار بالكائنات وذلك لأنّ مزاجهم رديّ وخيالهم قويّ بسبب اليبس الغالب على مزاج روحهم الذي في

There occurs to bilious[88] persons a certain foreknowledge of future events. This is because their [humoral] temperament is corrupted and their Imagination[89] is strong on account of the dryness that overwhelms the

85 As mentioned above, here also Ibn Sīnā appears to ascribe to the Imagery (a passive storehouse of images) a function typically associated with the Imagination (the active faculty charged with separating and combining images).

86 *al-Išārāt*, X.19, 381–382. Inati translates the part from *lā sīyamā … ġayru ṣārifatin ʿan-hu* as, "especially that the rational soul does not shun the imagination; rather, it manifests to it the divine trace;" *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 100–101. She is apparently reading *muẓāhiratun* as *muẓhiratun*, although in both Dunyā (vol. 4, 139) and Forget (215) the only reading given is *muẓāhiratun*.

87 *al-Išārāt*, X.19, 381.13–382.1. Cruz Hernández's at times very loose translation characterizes the rational soul as rendering the Imagination "[inestimable] aid insofar as it does not erase anything;" Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 93.

88 *al-mamrūrīn*, translated by Michot as "crazies;" Michot, *Genèse et Retour*, 79.

89 On understanding *ḫayāl* to mean "Imagination" instead of "Imagery" in this case, see Gutas, "Imagination," 2014, 339n9; and "Intellect," 2014, 8n19.

temperament of the pneuma in their brain, attenuating and desiccating it. Due to the corruption of their temperament, the theoretical intellect's resistance to the Imagination ceases. The Imagination is thus strengthened to the point that it is hardly quick to obey the senses, with the result that something passes by him but he does not see it, and he hears a sound but does not sense it.

الدماغ الملطّف المجفّف إيّاه فلرداءة مزاجهم تبطل المقاومة من العقل النظريّ للخيال فيقوى الخيال حتّى لا يكاد يذعن للحسّ وحتّى أنّ ذلك الإنسان يمرّ به شيء ولا يراه ويسمع صوتاً فلا يحسّ به

His sensation is also weak on account of the corruption of the temperament of the senses' instruments. As such, [sensation] does not hinder the Imagination in any significant way. [Likewise], the Imagination—in its [function] as Imagination—does not hinder the [rational] soul from making contact with the supernal realms; rather, it [Imagination] accedes to it [rational soul][90] and desires that something occur to the [rational] soul so that it may Imagine it. In fact, it [Imagination] hinders it [rational soul] only when a distraction from the senses or a concern from the functions of the Imagination distracts it.

ثمّ يكون إحساسه أيضاً ضعيفاً لفساد مزاج آلات الحسّ فلا يمانع الخيال كثير ممانعة والخيال لا يمانع النفس بما هو خيال عن الاتّصال بالعوالم العالية بل يجيب إليه ويشتهي أن يحدث في النفس أمر ما فيتخيّله ولكن إنّما يمانعه إذا شغله شاغل من حسّ أو أهمّه مهمّ من تخيّل

As for when a preoccupation [from the senses] does not distract it, nor does any function of the Imagination predominate over it, but rather it dislikes the objects of the Imagination that had been distracting and preoccupying it, having grown impatient with them—for each faculty has a certain weariness during which the senses alone are not strong enough to dominate it [the soul]—it is possible for the [rational] soul to find in this an opportunity and liberty from the preoccupations. Following this liberty, it makes con-

وأمّا إذا لم يشغله شاغل ولم يستولِ عليه تخيّل بل كرهت المعاني التي كانت تشغله وتهمّه من المتخيّلات وملّتها فإنّ لكلّ قوّة ملالاً ولم يكن الحسّ وحده قويَّ الاستيلاء عليها أمكن أن تجد النفس منه فرصةً وخلاصاً من الشاغلات ويلزم هذا الخلاص أن يتّصل بالعالم

90 The pronoun in *yujību ilay-hi* is masculine, and so may refer to "intellect," but the more likely antecedent is the (feminine) rational soul. Regardless, the significance is the same.

tact with the celestial realm. That [contact] is given generously to it, even while it is still connected to its physical shape,[91] so long as there is no obstacle impeding [the contact]. Therefore, he [the bilious] Experiences things from the states of that realm. But this is not due to the nobility of this person, but rather to his baseness.[92]

السماويّ فإنّ ذلك مبذول له وفي شبحه ما لم يعق عائق فحينئذ يشاهد أموراً من أحوال ذلك العالم وليس هذا لشرف هذا الإنسان بل لخساسته

Here, Ibn Sīnā explains how ill individuals in a state of delirium—elsewhere he uses the term "crazy" (*majnūn*)[93]—can accurately warn about future events by acquiring knowledge from the Unseen. Due to the delirium, the external senses are weakened. In this debilitated state, they do not transmit data from the external world to the internal senses, at least not to an extent that would fully preoccupy the Imagination and, as a result, distract the rational soul. Similarly, the images are not coming to the Imagination from the Common Sense or Imagery, something Ibn Sīnā refers to here as *taḫayyul*. While this is the term that Ibn Sīnā would later routinely use for the faculty of Imagination, itself, here it must mean something more like the functions of the Imagination, which

91 Reading *šabaḥihi* with MS Milan 320 = Ambrosiana 1450 Sup., fol. 230ª, against Nūrānī's unpointed *rasm* سحه. My thanks to Dimitri Gutas for providing the relevant manuscript images. Michot translates the term as "weariness." It would be uncharacteristic of Ibn Sīnā, however, to speak of the rational soul as being weary or lethargic. The intent here is clearly to indicate that this brief contact with the supernal realm may happen even while the soul remains associated with a body, expressed here by *šabaḥ*.

92 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.19, 119.21–120.13. Cf. the French translation in Michot, *Genèse et Retour*, 79. Ibn Sīnā's declaration that some individuals make contact with the supernal realm not because of their nobility but because of their baseness neutralizes Noble's rejection, based on certain gullible youths' ability to receive information from the supernal realm, that the practical intellect is what effects that contact; Noble, *Philosophising the Occult*, 188n41. Ibn Sīnā presents a similar account in the *Lesser Destination*, in which he also describes the soul's contact with the supernal realm as "given generously" (*mabḏūl*); *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XIII, 116.117, esp. 117.2. Nūrānī's edition of *Provenance and Destination* leaves much to be desired. While he lists the manuscripts that he examined (pp. 15–16 of the frontmatter), there is no critical apparatus listing variant readings. The passage here features certain textual inconsistencies that warrant investigation, for example: in *yujību ilay-hi, yumāniʿuhu, šaġalahu, ahammahu, lam yašġalhu,* and *lam yastawli ʿalay-hi,* the masculine pronouns all refer to the feminine rational soul. This is confirmed by the transition to the feminine verbs *karihat* and *tajida*, the latter of which has the rational soul (*al-nafs*) as its explicit subject. After *karihat*, the object pronouns revert to masculine in the subsequent *tašġaluhu* and *tuhimmuhu*, even though they also refer to the rational soul.

93 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XIII, 120.1 and 121.2.

include manipulating images that come to it from the internal or external senses. Because the Imagination is not busy with its functions, it is primed to support the rational soul. This provides the rational soul an opportunity—however fleeting it may be—to make contact with the supernal realm and to call the Imagination to its aid in so doing.

2.5 *Imagination, Imitation, and Interpretation*

Continuing his focus on the Imagination (X.20), Ibn Sīnā observes that it is naturally disposed not only to imitate whatever form that is near, but also to quickly transition from that form to its like and its opposite:

إنّ القوّة المتخيّلة جبلت محاكيةً لكلّ ما يليها من هيئة إدراكيّة أو هيئة مزاجيّة سريعة التنقّل من شيء إلى شبهه أو إلى ضدّه وبالجملة إلى ما هو منه بسبب وللتخصيص أسباب جزئيّة لا محالة وإن لم نحصّلها نحن بأعيانها

The Imagination is naturally disposed to imitate any nearby figuration related to attainment or temperament, and to quickly transition from a thing to its like and to its contrary: in general, to whatever has a causal relation to it. Of course, the specific reason [for the transition] has particular causes, even if we do not gain precise [knowledge] of them.[94]

This is something he also addresses in his discussion of the Imagination in the De Anima of the *Cure*.

ومن شأن هذه القوّة المتخيّلة أن تكون دائمة الإكباب على خزانتي المصوّرة والذاكرة ودائمة العرض للصور مبتدئة من صورة محسوسة أو مذكورة منتقلة منها إلى ضدّ وندّ أو شيء هو منه بسبب وهذه طبيعتها وأما اختصاص انتقالها من الشيء إلى ضدّه دون ندّه أو ندّه دون ضدّه فيكون لذلك أسباب جزئيّة لا تحصى

It is of the nature of this faculty of Imagination that it always applies itself to the storehouses of the Imagery and the Memory; and that it always applies itself to forms, beginning with forms of the senses or Memory, transitioning from them to their opposites and likenesses or to something that has a causal relation to it. This is its nature. The specific [reason for] its transitioning from the thing to its opposite rather than its like, or its like rather than its opposite, has innumerable particular causes.[95]

94 *al-Išārāt*, X.20, 382.7–10. Goichon and Cruz Hernández misread *min hay'atin idrākiyyatin aw hay'atin mizājiyyatin* as "being disposed to grasp/acquire or mix;" Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 515; Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 93.

95 *Avicenna's De Anima*, IV.2, 174.11–16. This is the principle that explains why, for example,

If this were not the nature of this faculty, it would be of no use to us in our intellectual endeavors (e.g., seeking the middle terms of syllogisms) or even in our recollection of things. Each thing that occurs to the Imagination results in either the faculty being roused toward imitating it (and then its like and its opposite), or the faculty remaining subdued.[96] It remains subdued either on account of resistance from the rational soul or on account of the clarity of the form that is engraved in it, such that it is perfectly represented. In this case, the Imagery is suspended in place and the image becomes intensely apparent.

Ibn Sīnā then begins to address what is happening when the rational soul makes contact with the supernal realm (**X.21–22**). The spiritual trace that results from this contact—regardless of whether it occurs in sleep or wakefulness—may be weak, in which case it does not cause the Imagery or Memory to move, and the trace does not endure. It may be stronger, however, in which case it causes the Imagery to move; but it is not strong enough to cause the Memory to relinquish its other functions and actually record it. But the trace may be stronger yet, in which case the rational soul is "calm and composed"[97] when it receives it. In this latter case, the form is then impressed very clearly in the Imagery and Memory.

There will be times when this occurs to one's own thoughts when one is awake. In some of those times, one's thoughts will be held firmly in Memory. But in other times, the Imagination may interrupt the rational soul's thought process, causing it to forget what it was thinking and desperately retrace its steps in order to remember:

Now it is not that this occurs to you only in the case of these traces, but also with regard to your thoughts that you experience while awake. At times your thought is detained in your Memory. While at [other] times you move on from it to objects of the Imagination that cause you to forget your concern,

وليس إنّما يعرض لك ذلك في هذه الآثار فقط بل وفيما تباشره من أفكارك يقظان فربّما انضبط فكرك في ذكرك وربّما انتقلت عنه إلى أشياء متخيّلة تُنسيك مهمّك فتحتاج إلى أن تحلّل

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when a hungry person goes to sleep, the Imagination imitates forms of foodstuffs, which appears to the sleeper as dreaming about food; IV.2, 179.14.

96 *fa-hāḍihi l-quwwatu yuz'ijuhā kullu sāniḥin ilā hāḍā l-intiqāli aw tuḍbaṭu*; *al-Išārāt*, X.20, 382.13. In reading *tuḍbaṭu*, I follow Forget's vocalization (215) against Zārī'ī's, which has a *fatḥa* as the case vowel (it is likely that this is misplaced and should be over the *bā'*, in which case it would agree with Forget).

97 X.21, 383.7–8. The text reads *wa-takūnu l-nafsu 'inda talaqqīhi rābiṭata l-ja'š*; cf. Ibn Sīnā's use of the term *al-nafs al-muṭma'inna*.

and as a consequence you need to [engage in] backward analysis; and you [need to] turn away from the detained thought toward the thought that appears [to the mind] next to it, moving from the latter to the former, and likewise to another. At times it [rational thought] will track down[98] what led it astray from its initial concern; and at times it will be cut off from it. It will track it down only by means of a certain analysis and [allegorical] interpretation.

بالعكس وتصير عن السانح المضبوط إلى السانح الذي يليه منتقلاً عنه إليه وكذلك إلى آخر فربّما اقتنص ما أضلّه من مهمّه الأوّل وربّما انقطع عنه وإنّما يقتنصه بضرب من التحليل والتأويل

Whatever of the trace that is under discussion is detained firmly in the Memory in the state of sleep or wakefulness is [either] inspiration, unambiguous revelation, or is a dream which does not need allegorical or oneiric interpretation. But whatever itself had ceased, while its imitations and the [imitations] of what follows it remain, is in need of one of them, which differs according to peoples, times, and customs; revelation [needs] allegorical interpretation, and dreams [need] oneiric interpretation.[99]

فما كان من الأثر الذي فيه الكلام مضبوطاً في الذكر في حال يقظة أو نوم ضبطاً مستقرّاً كان إلهاماً أو وحياً صراحاً أو حلماً لا يحتاج إلى تأويل أو تعبير وما كان قد بطل هو وبقيت محاكياته وتواليه احتاج إلى أحدهما وذلك يختلف بحسب الأشخاص والأوقات والعادات الوحي إلى تأويل والحلم إلى تعبير

Of course, working backward along the chain of stimuli that led from one thought to the next until one arrives at the initial thought is not always successful. Even when it is, it will require some form of analysis (*taḥlīl*), oneiric interpretation (*ta'bīr*), or allegorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*). But any trace that remains firmly established in the Memory will need none of the sort. This is precisely what he says in a comparable passage in the De Anima of the *Cure*. The terminology is remarkably similar (e.g., *taḥlīl*/*taḥallul bi-l-'aks*, *tunsī*/*ansat*), except in the *Cure* Ibn Sīnā expresses the stability of the supernal trace in the Memory with the term *istiṭbāt*, whereas in the *Pointers* he uses a derivation of *istiqrār*.

98 Cf. Ibn Sīnā's use of *iqtināṣ* ("tracking down" or "setting snares") when comparing the rational soul acquiring middle terms through thought to a hunter setting snares for its prey; *al-Mubāḥaṭāt*, 200.5–13.

99 *al-Išārāt*, X.21–22, 383.11–384.10.

Know that rational thought is afflicted with this faculty [the Imagination], [the affliction] resulting from this faculty's deception in [its] functioning as a distraction. [This is] because when, concerning a certain form, the rational soul[100] puts it to use toward a certain goal, it quickly transitions to something else that is not related to it, and from it to a third thing, causing the rational soul to forget what it first started with, to the point that the rational soul needs [the aid of] recollection, seeking refuge in backward analysis so that it may return to the beginning. When it happens in a state of wakefulness that the [rational] soul attains something, or in a state of sleep that it makes contact with the [realm of] Sovereignty (which we will fully describe later), then if it empowers the faculty [of Imagination], through its tranquility or through its subjugation, to perfectly stabilize [the trace], while not being overcome by something that would render it unable [to fulfill its function] in the moment that it stabilizes what has appeared to it from the activities of the Imagination, then the form seizes the Memory perfectly in its aspect and image. If this happens during wakefulness, [the rational soul] does not require recollection. If it happens during sleep, [it does not require] oneiric interpretation. And if it is revelation, [it does not require] allegorical interpretation.[101]

واعلم أنّ الفكر النطقيّ ممنوّ بهذه القوّة وهو من غريرة هذه القوّة في شغل شاغل فإنّه إذا استعملها في صورة ما استعمالاً موجّهاً نحو غرض ما انتقلت بسرعة إلى شيء آخر لا يناسبه ومنه إلى ثالث وأنست النفس أوّل ما ابتدأت عنه حتى تُحْوِج النفس إلى التذكّر فازعة إلى التحليل بالعكس حتى تعود إلى المبدأ وإذا اتّفق في حال اليقظة أن أدرك النفس شيئاً أو في حال النوم أن اتّصلت بالملكوت اتّصالاً على ما سنصفه بعد وصفاً فإنّ هذه القوّة إن مكّنتها بسكونها أو بانقهارها من حسن الاستثبات ولم تغلبها مقصرة عليها زمان الاستثبات لِما يلوح لها من تخيّلاتها تمكّنت تلك الصورة من الذكر تمكّناً جيّداً على وجهه وصورته فلم تحتج إن كان يقظةً إلى التذكر وإن كان نوماً إلى تعبير وإن كان وحياً إلى تأويل

100 Strictly speaking, "rational thought" is the only candidate for being the subject of this masculine verb. It is obvious, however, that rational thought stands in for the rational soul, which appears as the subject shortly after.

101 *Avicenna's De Anima*, IV.2, 175.9–176.3. Sebti, in commenting on this passage, remarks that the Imagination "does not submit to any power of the soul, not even to the theoretical intellect." This seems to contradict Ibn Sīnā's statement that the soul enables the Imagination. Sebti's translation of this passage differs from mine in some details—notably, Ibn Sīnā does not give desire a role in the backward analysis—but not in the broader sense; Sebti, "Re-Presentation in Avicenna's Doctrine of Knowledge," 99 (passage), 102 (desire).

The same point appears in the *Lesser Destination*, though Ibn Sīnā employs the phrase "analysis by guesswork" instead of "backward analysis." This passage additionally clarifies that it is the practical intellect, and not the Imagination alone, which makes contact with the supernal realm:

الحسّ إذا ترك استعمال القوّة المتخيّلة وترك شلله بما تورده عليه جذبتها القوّة العمليّة إلى تلك الجهة حتى انطبعت فيها تلك الصور إلّا أنّ القوّة المتخيّلة لما فيها من الغريزة المحاكية والمنتقلة من شيء إلى غيره تترك ما أخذت وتورد شبيهه أو ضدّه أو مناسبه كما يعرض لليقظان من أنه يشاهد شيئاً فينعطف عليه التخيّل إلى أشياء أخرى تحضره ممّا تتّصل به بوجه حتى ينسيه الشيء الأوّل فيعود على سبيل التحليل بالتخمين ويرجع إلى الشيء الأوّل بأن يأخذ الحاضر ممّا قد تأدّى إليه الخيال فيفطن أنّه خطر في الخيال تابعاً لأيّ صورة تقدّمته وتلك لأيّ صورة أخرى وكذلك حتّى ينتهي إلى البدء ويتذكّر ما نسيه

When the senses abandon employing the Imagination and abandon distracting it with what they transmit to it, the practical faculty draws it toward this [supernal] side to the point that these forms are imprinted in it. But, due to the Imagination's inborn inclination to imitate and transition from one thing to the next, it leaves behind what it had grasped and presents its like, opposite, or something similar. This is like what happens to someone awake insofar as he Experiences something and the Imagination then inclines away from it toward other things that become present to it, in a way, through what it made contact with. This causes him to forget the first thing, so he relies on the method of analysis through guesswork and returns to the first thing by taking the current [object] to have resulted from what the Imagination had arrived at. He then understands that it occurred to the Imagination following whatever form that had preceded it, and that [following] another form et cetera until he arrives at the beginning and remembers what he had forgotten.[102]

There are times when people experience a confusion of the senses or an arrest of the Imagery, and "the faculty receptive to the Unseen is prepared to make a pure reception [from it], while the Estimation is directed to a specific pur-

102 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XIII, 117.11–119.4. Given that this passage focuses on the Imagination's functioning, and Ibn Sīnā's unfortunate habit to periodically use *taḫayyul* and *ḫayāl* interchangeably, I interpret the final two instances of *ḫayāl* as both referring to the Imagination rather than the Imagery. This could, of course, be not an issue of Ibn Sīnā's habit but of the transmission history of this text.

pose. The reception of it [the Unseen] is thus specified."[103] In such cases, some people seek the aid of others—particularly those who have had profitable contact with the Unseen and are prepared to interpret the trace that is left behind (**X.23**). To illustrate this, Ibn Sīnā relates the following example:

مثل ما يؤثَر عن قوم من الترك أنّهم إذا فزعوا إلى كاهنهم في تقدمة معرفة فزع هو إلى شدّ حثيث جدّاً فلا يزال يلهث فيه حتّى يكاد يغشى عليه ثمّ ينطق بما يخيَّل إليه والمستمعة يضبطون ما يلفظه ضبطاً حتّى يبنوا عليه تدبيراً

[This is] like what is related about a Turkic people: namely, that whenever they seek the aid of their clairvoyant regarding predicting the future, he seeks the help of very fast running. He does not stop panting until he nearly faints. Then he speaks about what images appeared to him [from the Unseen]. Those who listen [to him] carefully preserve what he says so they that may base the management [of their affairs] on it.[104]

Through physical exhaustion, the soothsayer puts himself in a stupor that allows for contact with the celestial realm. Elsewhere, in a passage explaining the underlying process, Ibn Sīnā has said that this happens most often to those in a spell of epilepsy (*ṣarʿ*) or fainting (*ġašy*).

وأمّا إخبارهم بالغيب فإنّما يتّفق أكثر ذلك لهم عند أحوال كالصرع والغشي تفسد حركات قواهم الحسّيّة وقد يعرض أن تكلّ قواهم المتخيّلة لكثرة حركاتها المضطربة لأنّها قوّة بدنيّة وتكون هممهم عن المحسوسة مصروفة فيكثر رفضهم للحسّ وإذا كان كذلك فقد يتّفق أن لا تشتغل هذه القوّة بالحواسّ اشتغالاً مستغرقاً ويعرض لها أدنى سكون عن حركاتها المضطربة ويسهل

As for their informing about the Unseen, that happens to them most often in certain states, like epilepsy and fainting, which corrupt the motions of their sensory faculties. It happens that their faculty[105] of Imagination becomes fatigued from the abundance of their [the senses'] confused motions, since it is a corporeal faculty. Their concerns are turned away from the sensibles, and their rejection of the senses increases. When this is the case, it may happen that this faculty [Imagination] is not fully immersed in the senses. A repose that

103 *fa-tastiʿiddu l-quwwatu l-mutalaqqiyatu li-l-ġaybi talaqqiyan ṣāliḥan wa-qad wujjiha l-wahmu ilā ġaraḍin bi-ʿaynihi fa-yataḥaṣṣaṣu bi-ḏālika qabūluhu*; *al-Išārāt*, X.23, 384.14. The passive *wujjiha* could be read as active *wajjaha*. In either case, a higher faculty—"the faculty receptive to the Unseen"—is directing the Estimation to its purpose.

104 X.23, 384.14–385.3.

105 Though *quwāhā* is plural, I understand it in the singular, corresponding with the appearance of the singular *quwwa* in the next clause.

أيضاً انجذابها مع النفس الناطقة فيعرض للعقل العمليّ اطّلاع إلى أفق عالم النفس المذكور فيشاهد ما هناك ويتأدّى ما يشاهده إلى الخيال فيظهر منه كالمشاهد والمسموع فحينئذ إذا أخبر به المرور وخرج وفق مقاله يكون قد تكهّن بالكائنات المستقبلة

is farthest from their confused motions occurs to it, and it becomes easier for it to be pulled along with the rational soul. The practical intellect can rise up to the horizons of the aforementioned realm of the soul and Experience what is there. What it Experiences is conveyed to the Imagery, from which it appears like something seen or heard. Therefore, when a bilious individual gives an account of it and precisely what he said comes to be, he will have foretold future events.[106]

This passage agrees with what Ibn Sīnā presents on acquiring knowledge from the Unseen in the *Provenance and Destination* (translated above, cf. X.19), with the added information that this is prone to occur not only to the bilious, but also to those overcome by epilepsy or fainting. In all instances, the debilitation of the external senses releases the Imagination from attending to them, allowing it to assist the practical intellect in making contact with the souls of the celestial spheres.

While the common thread in these examples is the weakness of the corporeal faculties, this is not the only means by which fleeting moments of contact with the supernal realm can occur. Another such means is what we might today call hypnosis.

ومثل ما يشغل بعض من يستنطق في هذا المعنى بتأمّل شيء شفّاف مرعش للبصر برجرجته أو مدهش إيّاه بشفيفه ومثل ما يشغل بتأمّل لطخ من سواد برّاق وبأشياء تترقرق وبأشياء تمور فإنّ جميع ذلك ممّا يشغل الحسّ بضرب من التحيّر وممّا

[Another] example is one who is made to speak in this way being distracted by pondering something delicate and transparent that makes the vision tremble because of its quivering, or which baffles him with its transparency. It is [also] like one who is distracted by pondering a brilliant black stain, and by things that glisten, and by things that move to and fro. All of that is among what distracts the senses through a kind of confusion, and is among what initiates the Imagery to move in a confused manner, as if it were a forced rather

106 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XIII, 121.5–12.

than a natural [motion]. In their [Imagery and senses] confusion the [rational soul] takes advantage of the opportunity for the aforementioned stealth.[107]

يحرّك الخيال تحريكاً مخيّراً كأنّه إجبار لا طبع وفي حيرتهما اهتبال فرصة الخلسة المذكورة

To use a contemporary cliché related to hypnotism: An object swaying back and forth, over and over, transfixing the senses such that someone experiences utter calm, allows a magician to train that person to cluck like a chicken on command. Ibn Sīnā may not share our common association with hypnotism, but the principle he describes is the same. The swaying object, or one dazzling in its appearance, arrests the senses, and that part of the soul which misses no opportunity to come into contact with the supernal realm seizes the moment to do so.

The people who are most disposed to experience this contact via confusion are those who are most likely to be in a confused state, like simple-minded youth.[108] When the rational soul, through the mediation of the Imagination, takes advantage of these fleeting moments of confusion, and the Estimation is engaged intensely in aiding the rational soul, contact with the supernal realm comes shortly thereafter. He adds,

At times, the fleeting glance of the Unseen is a kind of strong opinion; and at times it is similar to a *jinnī*'s speech, or a call from someone

فتارةً يكون لمحان الغيب ضرباً من ظنّ قويّ وتارةً يكون شبيهاً بخطاب من جنّي أو

107 *al-Išārāt*, x.23, 385.4–8. In their translations, Goichon, Cruz Hernández, and Inati all do not discriminate here between the Imagery (*ḫayāl*) and the Imagination (*al-taḫayyul*), translating the former as the latter; Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 518; Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 97; Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 102.

108 "Where this most produces this effect is in the natures of those who are, by their nature, closer to bafflement and more suited to receive mixed statements, like simple-minded youth" (*wa-akṯaru mā yu'aṯṯiru hāḏā fa-fī ṭibā'i man huwa bi-ṭibā'hi ilā l-dahaši aqrabu wa-bi-qubūli l-aḥādīṯi l-muḫtaliṭati ajdaru ka-l-bulhi mina l-ṣibyān*); *al-Išārāt*, x.23, 385.9–10. This is not to be confused with what Ibn Sīnā says about youths rejecting lofty, intellectual pleasures for base, sensory pleasures in *Pointers* IX.6. That refers to the youths' neglect of pursuing the intelligibles because of their inclination toward worldly things. Their *theoretical intellect* is not prone in any special way to make contact with the active intellect. Here, in x.23, the focus is on their *practical intellect*. Due to their intellectual immaturity, they are more liable to enter into such a confused state that will allow their practical intellect to make contact with the souls of the celestial spheres. It is imperative to bear in mind that throughout *Pointers* x, Ibn Sīnā discusses the acquisition of unseen past, present, and future events (*al-muġayyabāt*) from the celestial souls, not intelligibles from the active intellect (which was the focus of *Pointers* IX).

هتاف من غائب وتارةً يكون مع ترائي شيء للبصر مكافحةً حتّى نشاهد صورة الغيب مشاهدةً

unseen; and at times it is concurrent with the appearance of something to the vision face-to-face, to the point that we actually Experience the form of the Unseen as an actually Experienced object.[109]

2.6 *Ibn Sīnā's Empiricism*

Having now alluded to all of the processes and circumstances involved in the acquisition of knowledge from the realm of the unseen, Ibn Sīnā addresses and refutes what he must consider a likely objection to the ongoing discussion (**x.24**). This section is the *coup de grâce* in quashing notions of any alleged mysticism in Ibn Sīnā's psychology and epistemology.[110] As such, it warrants quoting in full.

اعلم أنّ هذه الأشياء ليس سبيل القول بها والشهادة لها إنّما هي ظنون إمكانيّة صير إليها من أمور عقليّة فقط وإن كان ذلك أمراً معتمداً لو كان ولكنّها تجارب لمّا ثبتت طُلِبَت أسبابُها ومن السعادات المتّفقة لمحبّي الاستبصار أن تعرض لهم هذه الأحوال في أنفسهم أو يشاهدوها مراراً متوالية في غيرهم حتّى يكون ذلك تجربة في إثبات أمر عجيب له كون وصحّة وداعياً إلى طلب

Know that the way to profess and attest to these things is not [to say], 'they are merely plausible conjectures at which one arrives from intellectual matters only,' even though this would have been something to rely upon, had it been [the case]; rather, they are instances of Testing and Proving which, once confirmed, one seeks the causes. One of the instances of happiness that is vouchsafed to lovers of [philosophical] reflection is both that these states should occur to them personally and that they should observe them several times successively in others, to that point that all this becomes an instance of Testing and Proving of relevance to the establishment of something wondrous that has sound existence, and an incentive to seek its cause. When it [this wondrous something] is elucidated, the benefit is immense, and the ration-

109 *al-Išārāt*, x.23, 385.12–386.2. I follow Forget's reading of *nušāhidu* over Zārīʿī's *yušāhidu*; Forget, *Le livre des théorèmes*, 218.7.

110 As Gutas has stated, what Ibn Sīnā states here "is Avicenna in his least dogmatic moment" and "is the most explicit acknowledgement of empiricism that one finds in his works;" "Imagination," 2014, 353.

al soul finds reassurance in the existence of these causes, while the Estimation humbles itself and does not oppose the intellect in its vanguard function relating to the [investigation of] these [causes].[111]

سببه فإذا اتّضح جسمت الفائدة واطمأنّت النفس إلى وجود تلك الأسباب وخضع الوهم فلم يعارض العقل فيما يربأ ربأه منها

Here, Ibn Sīnā is reiterating that his epistemology is not merely based on conjecture and theory, but rather on repeated experience[112] of phenomena whose causes can be ascertained; in other words, he is affirming that his epistemology is an empirical epistemology, at least according to the criteria of his time. That being said, he acknowledges that his detractors will not likely be persuaded, even by a detailed explanation.

2.7 *Conclusion to the Excursus on Imaginative Knowledge*

Before moving onto the next section, I want to return briefly to the question of which faculty makes contact with and receives information from the supernal realm: Does the Imagination or Estimation, or both, directly make contact with the supernal realm, or is it the practical intellect that does so? As I asserted in section 2.1, the evidence overwhelmingly supports the latter. But since that evidence is scattered throughout passages translated and referenced in this section (and in chapter 3), for purposes of clarity I will collect it in summary form here.

On numerous occasions across a multitude of texts, Ibn Sīnā articulates that the Imagination and Estimation function as aids to another faculty when it comes to making contact with the souls of the celestial spheres. Oftentimes, he does not overtly name that faculty. For example, in *Provenance and Destination*—one of his earliest compositions—he observes, "This contact comes about on the part of the Estimation and Imagination and through their use (*bi-stiʿmālihimā*) concerning particular things."[113] This seems, at first, to be an admission that the two faculties of Estimation and Imagination make contact

111 *al-Išārāt*, x.24, 386.4–11. Translation in Gutas, "Imagination and Transcendental Knowledge," 353 and "The Empiricism of Avicenna," 34 (translation slightly modified, emphasis added). Gutas discusses the many mistranslations and subsequent misunderstandings of this reminder in "Imagination," 2014, 353n46. He did not address Cruz Hernández, who also misreads the passage and doubles down on his misreading by adding the qualifier "scientific" to "way": "You should know that there is no [scientific] way whatsoever to discuss these things …;" *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 98.

112 On the role of empirical experience and the terms used to convey this concept in Ibn Sīnā's epistemology, see Gutas, "The Empiricism of Avicenna," 44–46.

113 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.17, 117.19–20. For Arabic, see above, p. 164.

with the supernal realm. Yet, such an interpretation is immediately complicated by the phrase *bi-stiʿmālihimā*. I have translated this here as "through their use," but that is not really accurate. The word *isitʿmāl* more properly means "apply, employ, put to use." Since the dual pronoun, which refers to the two faculties, is in the objective position, it is evident that the Estimation and Imagination are not the agent making contact with the supernal realm. Instead, something is putting them to use in doing so.[114]

We get a hint at what that something is later in the same text. Ibn Sīnā says simply that "the Imagination—in its [function] as Imagination—does not hinder the soul from making contact with the supernal realms; rather, it [Imagination] accedes to it [soul] and desires that something occur to the soul so that it may Imagine it."[115] In this case, we are told only that the Imagination helps the soul by not distracting it;[116] and, in fact, it desires for something to descend to the soul from above so that it may Imagine it. Ibn Sīnā similarly declares in the *Pointers* that "when sensory distractions become fewer and there remain fewer distractions, it is not far-fetched for the soul to have fleeting moments in which it is free from the distraction of the Imagination and arrives at the side of sanctity. Something of the Unseen is then engraved in it. It then travels to the realm of the Imagination and is engraved in the Common Sense."[117] We can confidently infer in both cases that by "soul" Ibn Sīnā means rational soul. Even if, following Mousavian and Mostafavi's understanding, the concept "rational soul" encompasses the animal soul and its faculties, if Ibn Sīnā meant that the Imagination directly effects contact with the supernal realm, there would be no need at all to even mention "soul." He would have just said that the Imagination "desires that something occur to *itself*." The Imagination's subordinate role is even more clearly established in the *Pointers*, as the supernal engraving travels from a higher faculty to the Imagination. Elsewhere in *Provenance and Destination*, Ibn Sīnā mentions that when "that part of him which misses no opportunity to come into contact with that [supernal realm] is abundant …

114 Al-Akiti argues that this passage presents an inconsistency in Ibn Sīnā's account of prophecy insofar as it suggests that the Imagination and Estimation, but not the practical intellect, are involved in contact with the souls of the celestial spheres. This passage, he adds, contradicts Ibn Sīnā's attestation, in *Lesser Destination* (see below), to the involvement of the practical intellect. He suggests either that the relevant part of *Lesser Destination* is inauthentic (which he considers doubtful), or that Ibn Sīnā changed his mind on how to discuss this prophetic property; "Three Properties of Prophethood," 205–206.

115 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.19, 120.5–6. For the Arabic, see above, p. 229.

116 Michot characterizes this as the Imagination's negative role in prophecy; its other, positive role, is to translate what is received via prophecy; *Destinée*, 126.

117 *al-Išārāt*, X.18, 380.11–13. For the Arabic, see above, p. 226.

the Imagination is pulled along with it and sees the truth and retains it."[118] In the *Pointers*, when the soul receives an engraving from above, the Imagination is "roused toward" it.[119] While the part of the human that makes contact with the supernal realm is left unspecified in both examples, it cannot be the Imagination. If it were, there would be no reason to state that the Imagination "is pulled along with it" or "roused toward it."

The Imagination is pulled along with the rational soul because it is one of the soul's instruments (*āla*) or aids (*muʿānī*). In the De Anima of the *Cure*, written about a decade after *Provenance and Destination*, Ibn Sīnā mentions that the Imagination "is apt to be of good service to the soul" when it comes to veridical dreams.[120] In *Philosophy*, written a few years later, Ibn Sīnā similarly observes that "the human soul makes contact with the spiritual realm and the souls of the angelic substances … through the faculty of Imagination, which is its instrument in this activity. [It] helps the [rational] soul in making contact with the supernal [realm]."[121] Now in the *Pointers*, written some three to seven years after *Philosophy*, we learn of the "rational soul's natural use of it," meaning the Imagination, because "it is among the soul's two aids" during contact with the supernal realm, the other being the Estimation.[122] Given the Estimation's role of helper, it is "directed (*wujjiha*) to a specific purpose" by the "faculty receptive to the Unseen".[123] Were the Estimation itself that "faculty receptive to the Unseen," the passive construction would certainly not be called for. The Imagination cannot be what directs the Estimation to its purpose, as we have already seen that the Imagination is also controlled by another faculty in this context.

Fortunately, Ibn Sīnā is also explicit about precisely which faculty it is that is receptive to the Unseen. In *Lesser Destination*, written shortly after *Provenance and Destination*, he emphasizes the distinct roles of the theoretical and practical intellects when facing the supernal realm: "As for intellectual forms, contact with them is through the theoretical intellect. As for these forms that we are discussing [i.e., of particular events], the [rational] soul conceptualizes them only by another faculty, namely the practical intellect, which the Imagination serves in this regard. Thus, the soul obtains particular things from the lofty intellectual substances by means of its faculty known as the practical intel-

118 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.18, 119.9–10. For the Arabic, see above, p. 163.
119 *al-Išārāt*, X.18, 381.4. For the Arabic, see above, p. 226.
120 *Avicenna's De Anima*, IV.2, 180.16. For the Arabic, see above p. 224.
121 *Dānišnāma*, Ṭabīʿiyyāt, 135.8–9. For the Persian, see p. 217n56.
122 *al-Išārāt*, X.18, 381.6. For the Arabic, see p. 226.
123 X.23, 384.13–14. For the Arabic, see p. 236n103.

lect."[124] Remaining in the *Lesser Destination*, we further read that "the practical intellect can rise up to the horizons of the aforementioned realm of the soul and Experience what is there."[125] It does so "when the senses abandon employing the Imagination and abandon distracting it," thereby allowing "the practical faculty to draw it toward this [supernal] side to the point that these forms are imprinted in it."[126]

All of this evinces that the rational soul, in the guise of the practical intellect, through the assistance of its helpers, Imagination and Estimation, is what makes contact with the Unseen, resulting in the receipt of information about events in the past, present, and/or future. It is worthwhile now to recall an analogy that Ibn Sīnā uses to characterize one of those helpers, the Estimation. In *Epistle on Love*, he avers that "the rational faculty seeks to administer the Estimation by means of seeking its aid" in obtaining what it pursues. Through its close association with the rational faculty, the Estimation grows stronger. Although increased strength does not impart upon the Estimation the ability independently to make contact with the supernal realm, the Estimation nonetheless deceives itself into believing that this is the case. It begins to resist the rational soul, "fancying itself [capable] of obtaining, through giving form to intelligibles," what the rational soul alone can obtain. The Estimation haughtily conflates giving form to intelligibles with receiving them. Ibn Sīnā likens this to a servant (Estimation) thinking that he has become the master (rational soul).[127]

We should call this analogy to mind when reading the final sentence of *Pointers* X.24: "When it [this wondrous something] is elucidated, the benefit is immense, and the rational soul finds reassurance in the existence of these causes, while the Estimation *humbles itself* and does not oppose the intellect in its vanguard function relating to the [investigation of] these [causes]."[128] Just as it does with the theoretical intellect in the acquisition of intelligibles, the Estimation must humble itself before the practical intellect in the acquisition of particulars from the souls of the celestial spheres.

Lastly, we should also remember how Ibn Sīnā characterizes the Imagination when it is left to its own devices: "the lying Imagination" (*al-taḫayyul al-kāḏib*), which must be "subdued" (*quhirat*) in order for veridical dreams and waking visions to occur.[129] The lying Imagination must be subdued, and the haughty

124 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XIII.117.3–5. For the Arabic, see p. 209n23.
125 XIII, 121.5. For the Arabic, see p. 237.
126 XIII, 117.11–13. For the Arabic, see p. 235.
127 Mehren, *Traités Mystiques*, 1894, 3:12.4–11. For the Arabic, see p. 166.
128 *al-Išārāt*, X.24, 386.13–15. For the Arabic, see p. 239–240.
129 *Avicenna's De Anima*, IV.2, 177.8. For full passage, p. 164.

Estimation must be humbled. It is doubtful that Ibn Sīnā would have assigned such a weighty responsibility as directing making contact with the supernal realm to such unreliable and untrustworthy faculties.

3 Motive Power

While the preceding "reminder" (*tanbīh*) has both the tone and content of a conclusion, Ibn Sīnā is not quite done, as he still has to address the motive mode of prophecy and marvels.[130] He reiterates (**x.25**) that one should not rush to question the veracity of reports of unusual things about the knowers, even if those unusual things "nearly overturn the ordinary."[131]

وذلك مثل ما يقال إنّ عارفاً استقسى للناس فسقوا أو استشفى لهم فشفوا أو دعا عليهم فخسف بهم وزُلْزِلوا أو هلكوا بوجه آخر أو دعا لهم فصرف عنهم الوباء والموتان والسيل والطوفان أو خشع لبعضهم سبع أو لم ينفرّ عنه طير ومثل ذلك ممّا لا يأخذ في طريق الممتنع الصريح فتوقّف ولا تعجل فإنّ لأمثال هذه أسباباً في أسرار الطبيعة

This is like when it is said that a knower sought rain for a people, and they received it; or sought that they be healed, and they were; or wished them ill, and they were cast down, victims of earthquakes, or perished in some other way; or wished them well, and they were emancipated from plague, murrain, floods and storms; or a beast submits to one of them; or no bird flees from them; and [other examples] of the likes of those, among what should not be taken to be of the purely impossible path. Halt, and do not haste! For the likes of these have causes [found] in the inner meanings of natural philosophy.[132]

As early as *Guidance*, Ibn Sīnā had already explained how rare events can come to be from the power of the rational soul; events like cooling what is hot, heating what is cold, moving what is stationary, or arresting what is in motion (passage below). In *Provenance and Destination*, he evinces evildoers being made to

130 This mode of prophecy has also been referred to as "telekinesis" and "prophecy by willpower;" Gutas, "The Empiricism of Avicenna," 34n71; Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 160. Sebti discusses this property of prophecy, based on De Anima IV.4 of the *Cure*, in *Avicenne*, 115–123.

131 *takādu ta'tī bi-qalbi l-ʿādati*; *al-Išārāt*, x.25, 387.2. The frequency with which he implores his reader to not discount seemingly far-fetched reports leads one to question whether he expected much opposition to the content of this chapter.

132 x.25, 387.3–7.

perish, good-doers convalescing, and fire or earthquakes being called forth.[133] Tellingly, in both these cases he uses the phrase "it is not far-fetched" (*fa-lā yabʿud*) before giving these examples, much like he does frequently in the *Pointers*. In *Lesser Destination*, he likewise declares, "I do not deny" (*lā nunkir*) that some souls can initiate motion and rest, cooling and heating, and rigidness and suppleness, from which may result clouds and winds, lightning and earthquakes.[134] He similarly avers in the De Anima of the *Cure*, "These souls can heal the ill and sicken the evil. It is within their ability to destroy and strengthen natures, and transform the elements with the result that not-fire becomes fire and not-earth becomes earth. Rain and fruitful land occur according to their will, just as do sinkholes and plagues."[135] As he has said repeatedly in this chapter of the *Pointers*, all of these things have causes that can be explained on the basis of the inner meanings (*asrār*) of natural philosophy.

Elaborating on those inner meanings, Ibn Sīnā defends his assertion that some rational souls are able to have an effect on bodies other than their own (**x.26**). He begins by reminding his reader that the rational soul is not imprinted in its body. He then adds that, on account of the bond between the soul and body, dispositions of the soul are transmitted to the body, despite the body and soul being of different substances.[136] To illustrate his point, he provides well-known examples of someone's mind causing him to stumble or precipitating the onset of, or convalescence from, illness.

أنّ وهم الماشي على جذع معروض فوق فضاء يفعل في إزلاقه ما لا يفعله وهمُ مثله والجذع على قرار ويتبع أوهام الناس تغيّرُ مزاج مدرّجاً أو دفعة وابتداء أمراض أو إفراق منها

The Estimation of someone walking upon a stump perched over an empty space exerts an influence on that individual's slipping in a way that the Estimation of someone like him does not while the stump is fixed [on firm ground]. Changes of temperament follow people's Estimations gradually or all at once, as does the onset of or relief from illness.[137]

133 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, II.9, 86.13–23.

134 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XIV, 124–125; passage is translated in Noble, *Philosophising the Occult*, 197.

135 *fa-takūnu hāḍihi l-nafsu tubriʾu l-marḍā wa-tumriḍu l-ašrāra wa-yatbaʿuhā an tuhaddima ṭabāʾiʿa wa-an tuʾakkida ṭabāʾiʿa wa-an tastaḥīla la-hā l-ʿanāṣiru fa-yaṣirū ġayru l-nāri nāran wa-ġayru l-arḍi arḍan wa-taḥduṯu bi-irādatihā amṭārun wa-ḫiṣbun ka-mā yaḥduṯu ḫasfun wa-wabāʾun*; *Avicenna's De Anima*, IV.4, 200.20–201.2. I use sinkhole as a liberal translation of *ḫasf*, which signifies sinking into or being swallowed up by the earth.

136 *al-Išārāt*, X.26, 387.10–388.1.

137 X.26, 388.1–4. I follow Forget in reading *wahmu miṭlihi* against Zārīʿī's *wahmun miṭluhu*; Forget, *Le livre des théorèmes*, 219.15.

The examples adduced here are of the Estimation exerting an effect on its own body, much like what appears in *Provenance and Destination*.[138] Ibn Sīnā's primary concern, however, is to clear a path to assert that the soul can affect the elements of *other* bodies without any contact ever occurring between them.

He implores his reader to "*not* consider it far-fetched that a soul can have a disposition whose effect transcends its body, and that, due to [the disposition's] strength, it is like a soul to the world."[139] Ibn Sīnā similarly likens the rational soul to the "soul to the world" in *Provenance and Destination*.[140] By this allusive statement, he means that individual human souls can affect elemental matter in the same manner that the souls of the celestial spheres can. This is, in fact, how he begins his concise account of miracles in *Guidance*. Note his use of language, now quite familiar, cautioning his reader not to dismiss something because it seems improbable:

والنفوس الإنسانيّة مناسبة للمفارقات وتطيعها المادّة العنصريّة كما في بدنها حتى تتبع تصوّراتها تسخينات وتبريدات وتبخيرات ينشر عنها بعض الأعضاء وليست عن معانٍ طبيعيّة حتى يكون

Human souls are similar to the separate [souls of the celestial spheres]. Elementary matter submits to them as if they were in its body, to the point that heating up, cooling off, and vaporization follow their conceptualizations, from which certain organs unfold. This is not

138 In this case, the example is of the Estimation causing heat in a body part, or the Imagination causing a body part to move; *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, 11.10, 87.12–14; French trans. in Michot, *Genèse et Retour*, 62.

139 *fa-lā tastabʿidanna an takūna li-baʿḍi l-nufūsi malakatun yataʿaddā taʾṯīruhā badanahā wa-takūna li-quwwatihā ka-anna-hā nafsum mā li-l-ʿālami*; *al-Išārāt*, x.26, 388.5–6. I read (as does Inati) *wa-takūna li-quwwatihā* as dependent on *an* and, therefore, something else that the reader should not deem far-fetched. Goichon and Cruz Hernández follow Forget's vocalization in the masculine: *wa-yakūnu li-quwwatihā*. This makes the subject of *yakūnu* the effect (*taʾṯīr*) rather than the soul. The effect—or, "mastery," per Goichon—is due to the strength of the soul (*wa-yakūnu* [*al-taʾṯīru*] *li-quwwati* [*al-nafsi*]). While this is how Goichon presents it, Cruz Hernández's translation is unfortunately muddled: "Surely you don't find it far-fetched to believe that certain souls possess a power [*poder*, *malaka*] whose influence goes beyond its own body and that this [*esto*, *wa-yakūna*] is due to the its strength, as if it were a kind of universal soul;" Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 101; Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 521. The only option as antecedent of the masculine pronoun (*esto*) is *poder* ("power"), which is how Cruz Hernández translates *malaka* ("disposition"). This, however, does not fit with his reading of *wa-yakūnu* in the masculine. Of course, neither reading correctly identifies the verb's implicit subject, which is *al-nafs*: *wa-takūna* [*al-nafsu*] *li-quwwati* [*l-malakati*] *ka-anna-hā nafsum mā li-l-ʿālami*. This reading is confirmed later in this section, where Ibn Sīnā mentions the rational soul strengthening its disposition through its domination over the bodily faculties.

140 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, 11.10, 87.17.

مبدأ ذالك قوةً طبيعيّة كحرارة بحرارة وبرودة ببرودة **فلا يبعد** أن يكون بعض النفوس القويّة يبلغ أن يذعن له مادّة خارجة عن بدنه إذ هي من طبع بدنه ومادّته وأن تتسخّر له مادّة العالم تسخيرها لما يناسبه من الأمور المفارقة منطبعةً بما يتصوّر فيه فيحدث في العالم معجزات ترجع إلى مبادئ من الحرارة والبرودة وغير ذلك لو كانت طبيعيّة

a result of something natural, such that the principle of that would be a natural force like heat [resulting from] heat and cold [resulting from] cold. **It is not far-fetched** that a powerful soul reaches the point where matter external to its body obeys it, since this is of the nature of its body and its matter. [Nor is it far-fetched] that the world's matter is subjugated to it—its subservience being due to its [the soul's] similarity to the separate things—[and] imprinted by what is conceptualized in it. It [the soul] generates in this world miracles which, were they [the result of cause and effect in] nature, would be attributable to such principles as heat, cold, etc.[141]

This is the entirety of the section on miracles in *Guidance*, a text which shares aspects of the *Pointers*'s concision and allusiveness. He elaborates on the similarity of the rational soul to the celestial souls in the De Anima of the *Cure*, observing that "the [rational] soul is of the [same] substance as some of the principles which invest matter with its constituting forms."[142]

Despite superficial appearances, Ibn Sīnā's claim here is not that these events are unnatural, but that the most familiar pattern of cause and effect found in nature does not apply here. This is not the commonplace cause and effect of something hot heating up something else, or vice versa. Instead, he argues that it is within the abilities of the rational soul to exert an influence on elemental bodies, even when no contact takes place between the body belonging to the rational soul and those other bodies. He has already addressed in *Pointers* X.10 that the motions of the celestial bodies are the cause of events in the sublunar realm. This occurs even though there is no contact between the celestial bodies and the affected bodies in the lower realm. The key principle that he introduces in X.26, and which he also addresses in *Guidance* and *Cure*, is that the human rational soul's consubstantiality with the celestial souls allows it similarly to affect elements in other bodies without even touching them. This remains a cause-and-effect relationship that can be explained by means of nat-

141 *al-Hidāya*, III.4, 288.4–289.2. Ibn Sīnā provides a similar account in the De Anima of the *Cure*; *Avicenna's De Anima*, IV.4, 199.1–5.

142 *li-anna l-nafsa min jawhari ba'ḍi l-mabādi'i llatī hiya tulbisu l-mawādda mā fī-hā mina l-ṣuwari l-muqawwimati la-hā*; *Avicenna's De Anima*, IV.4, 199.5–6.

ural philosophy. It is simply far less common than the typical cause and effect relationships that we experience.

The fundamental source of this effect is a form taking root firmly in the rational soul. He illustrates this in the De Anima of the *Cure*, using the same examples that appear in the *Pointers*.

In fact, the form in the soul is the principle for what comes to be in the elements. For example, the form of health in a doctor's soul is the principle for the convalescence that comes to be; the same goes for the form of the couch in the carpenter. This [principle], however, is among the principles that only lead to the issuance of what makes it necessary through instruments and media. There is need for these instruments only due to a certain inability and weakness. But consider the state of a sick person who assumes that he will become well, and the healthy person who assumes that he will fall ill. Often enough it happens from this that, when the form becomes firm in his soul and Estimation, his [body's] elements are affected by it, and there is health or illness. This [healing] is stronger than what a doctor does with his instruments and media.

بل الصورة التي في النفس هي مبدأ لما يحدث في العنصر كما أنّ الصورة الصحّيّة التي في نفس الطبيب مبدأ لما يحدث من البرء وكذلك صورة السرير في ذات النجّار لكنّه من المبادئ التي لا تنساق إلى إصدار ما هي موجبة له إلّا بآلات ووسائط وإنّما تحتاج إلى هذه الآلات لعجز وضعف وتأمّلْ حال المريض الذي توهّم أنّه قد صحّ والصحيح الذي توهّم أنّه مرض فإنّه كثيراً ما يعرض من ذلك أن يكون إذا تأكّدت الصورة في نفسه وفي وهمه انفعل منها عنصره فكانت الصحّة أو المرض ويكون ذلك أبلغ ممّا يفعله الطبيب بآلات ووسائط

Because of this it is often possible, for example, for someone to race over a stump placed in the middle of the road. But if it is placed like a bridge under which there is an abyss, he will not have the courage to even crawl over it except very slowly. [This is] because he Imagines in his soul, in a very strong manner, the form of falling. His nature and the strength of his body parts accede to this [act of the Imagination], and do not accede to its contrary, namely fixedness and stability. When the existence of these forms becomes firmly fixed in the soul, [along with] the conviction that they must exist [in the

ولهذا السبب ما يمكن الإنسان مثلاً أن يعدو على جذع ملقى في القارعة من الطريق وإن كان موضوعاً كالجسر وتحته هاوية لم يجسر أن يمشي عليه دبيباً إلّا بالهوينا لأنّه يتخيّل في نفسه صورة السقوط تخيّلاً قويّاً جدّاً فتجيب إلى ذلك طبيعته وقوّة أعضائه ولا تجيب إلى ضدّه من الثبات والاستمرار فالصور إذا استحكم وجودها

في النفس واعتقاد أنّها يجب أن توجد فقد يعرض كثيراً أن تنفعل عنها المادّة التي من شأنها أن تنفعل عنها وتكوّن فإن كان ذلك في النفس الكلّيّة التي للسماء والعالم جاز أن يكون مؤثّراً في طبيعة الكلّ وإن كان في نفس جزئيّة جاز أن يؤثّر في الطبيعة الجزئيّة

extra-mental world], it does frequently occur that [these forms] affect the [body's] matter, whose nature it is to be affected and informed by [such forms]. If this is [the case] concerning the universal soul that belongs to the heavens and the earth, it is permissible that it has an effect on the nature of the universe. Likewise, if it is [the case] concerning a particular soul, then it is permissible that it has an effect on particular natures.[143]

For the rational soul to affect a body—whether its own or some other body—it must have the proper predisposition and an appropriate form must then become firmly rooted in the soul. The faculties involved are the Estimation (*wahm*) and Imagination (*taḫayyul*). While at first this may appear to be incongruous, the incongruity is resolved when we recall that Ibn Sīnā characterizes the faculty responsible for combining and separating images the Imagination (*al-taḫayyul*) when it serves the Estimation, and Cogitative faculty (*al-mufakkira*) when it serves the rational soul as intellect.[144] His examples are well selected. One could hardly deny the phenomenon that he represents with the walker struggling even to crawl on a passage perched over an abyss. That the onset of convalescence may come after one is sufficiently convinced that one is about to return to good health is also well attested. When this conviction follows from a visit with the doctor and the application of one of his instruments, what we have is a remarkably prescient account of the placebo effect.

Ibn Sīnā's goal, however, is not to convince his reader that the rational soul has an effect on its own body; it is to argue that the rational soul can have a similar effect on other bodies, even when its own body does not come into contact with them. This is an ability that he consistently ascribes to an extraordinarily powerful rational soul transcending its body, and the elements obeying such a soul.

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143 IV.4, 199.13–200.10.

144 In this way, he says, the Imagination "is like a certain faculty belonging to the Estimation, and, through the mediation of the Estimation, [belonging] to the intellect" (*wa-ka-anna-hā quwwatum mā li-l-wahmi wa-bi-tawassuṭi l-wahmi li-l-ʿaqli*); *al-Išārāt*, III.9, 241.1–2.

Provenance and Destination

If an agent is powerful, the elements will most certainly obey him. As we have already established, the [rational] soul is capable of effecting something in the elements in the manner [that] nature acts, but due to progressive, natural causes. It is not far-fetched that a powerful soul, through its effect, can transcend its body … This is among what should not be considered far-fetched. Syllogisms do not entail its impossibility; in fact, they entail its possibility, although it is rare.[145]

فإن كان الفاعل قويّاً أطاعه العنصر لا محالة وقد قرّرنا أنّ للنفس أن تفعل في العنصر شيئاً على مجرى فعل الطبيعة ولكنّ بالأسباب الطبيعيّة المتقادمة فلا يبعد أن يكون نفس قويّة تجاوز بتأثيرها هذا بدنها … وهذا ممّا لا يبعد وليس قياس يوجب امتناعه بل القياس يوجب إمكانه وإن كان نادراً

Cure

When the [rational] soul is strong, noble, and resembles the [celestial] principles, the elements in this realm obey it, are affected by it, and there comes to exist in the elements what is conceived in [the soul]. That is because the human soul is not imprinted in its matter (as we will explain), but it manages its concerns. If this kind of relation makes it so that it can make the bodily elements deviate from what their nature requires, then it is no wonder that the noble, very powerful [rational] soul can, in its influence, transcend what properly belongs to its body when its immersion in leaning toward that body is neither intense nor strong and, in addition to that, it is high of rank and very strong of disposition.[146]

النفس إذا كانت قويّة شريفة شبيهة بالمبادئ أطاعها العنصر الذي في العالم وانفعل عنها ووجد في العنصر ما يتصوّر فيها وذلك لأنّ النفس الإنسانيّة سنبيّن أنّها غير منطبعة في المادّة التي لها لكنّها متصرّفة الهمّة إليها فإن كان هذا الضرب من التعلّق يجعل لها أن تحيل العنصر البدنيّ عن مقتضى طبيعته فلا بدع أن تكون النفس الشريفة القويّة جدّاً تجاوز بتأثيرها ما يختص بها من الأبدان إذا لم يكن انغماسها في الميل إلى ذلك البدن شديداً قويّاً وكانت مع ذلك عالية في طبقتها قويّة في ملكتها جدّاً

Philosophy

It happens that some souls, through [the faculty of] Estimation or the evil eye, can affect the body of another person. But for all of this there is no impediment to understanding that

و افتد بعضی نفسها که بوهم و بچشم زدگی اندر جسم دیگر کس اثر کند ولیکن بااین همه مانع نیست از خرد که بعضی مردم را نفسی قوی

145 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.20, 121.3–11. In what I elided, Ibn Sīnā discusses the evil eye as an example of the soul's effect transcending its body.

146 *Avicenna's De Anima*, IV.4, 200.12–20.

some people have strong souls that can greatly affect the bodies of this world through their Estimation and will to the point that the bodies of this world undergo a great change because of these people, especially in terms of heat, cold, and motion. All miracles arise from this.[147]

افتد که اندر اجسام این عالم فعل عظیم تواند
کردن بوهم و بخواست خویش تا اجسام این عالم
بسبب وی تغیّر عظیم پذیرد خاصّه بگرمی وسردی
و بجنبش و از اینجا شکافد همه معجزها

Since this phenomenon belongs naturally to the rational soul, any such soul could, theoretically, influence the elements. This is why Ibn Sīnā, acknowledging that this phenomenon is quite rare, so adamantly limits this ability in practice to superbly strong rational souls.

Returning to the *Pointers*, Ibn Sīnā delineates the following circumstances in which this exceptional power may belong to the human rational soul (**x.27**): 1) it may belong to the soul on account of the nature of its body's original temperament, for—as he reiterated in x.26—dispositions of the body may have an effect on the soul;[148] 2) it may belong to the soul due to a present temperament, rather than the original; or 3) it may belong to the soul due to the intensity of its body's purity, which allows for "a kind of acquisition which makes the soul like a [being] denuded of matter due to the intensity of its purity," that is to say, as if it has no attachment to a body.[149] This latter circumstance, he says, is what occurs to God's pious Friends (*awliyā' allāh al-abrār*).

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147 *Dānišnāma*, Ṭabīʿiyyāt, 141.4–9; cf. French trans. in Achena and Massé, *Le Livre de science*, II, 87.

148 Ibn Sīnā explains that, in this case, "At times this power belongs to the soul in accordance to its [body's] original temperament. On account of a certain figuration of the soul that it [the temperament] it imparts to it [the soul], the individual soul comes to have its individuation" (*hāḏihi l-quwwatu rubba-mā kānat li-l-nafsi bi-ḥasabi l-mizāji l-aṣliyyi li-mā yufīduhu min hay'atin nafsāniyyatin taṣīru li-l-nafsi l-šaḫṣiyyati tašaḫḫuṣuhā*); *al-Išārāt*, x.27, 389.1–2. I modify Michot's translation, whom I follow in reading *tašaḫḫuṣuhā* versus *tašaḫḫuṣahā* in both Zāriʿī and Forget; see Michot, "Ibn Taymiyya's Commentary," 153n149. A more literal translation of *hay'a nafsāniyya* would be a "figuration related to the soul" or "a psychic figuration." Calling it a "spiritual disposition," as Goichon and later Cruz Hernández do, confusingly blends *nafsānī* with a common translation for *rūḥānī* and risks misleading the reader given the widespread contemporary connotations of the word "spiritual" in English; Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 522; Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 102. While being more accurate, calling it "psychic" or "psychical," as Michot and Inati do, risks misinterpretation due to the meanings commonly associated with "psychic" in contemporary English; Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 105.

149 [*wa-qad taḥṣulu*] *bi-ḍarbin mina l-kasbi yajʿalu l-nafsa ka-l-mujarradati li-šiddati l-zakāʾi*; *al-Išārāt*, x.27, 389.4. Goichon, Cruz Hernández, and Inati all read *li-šiddati l-ḍakāʾ*, which appears in Forget and Dunyā's editions. I follow Zāriʿī's reading of *al-zakāʾ*. My understand-

What comes next is a truly remarkable statement that highlights Ibn Sīnā's scientific approach to explaining what he has been calling strange phenomena (**x.28**):

والذي يقع له هذا في جبلّة النفس ثمّ يكون خيّراً رشيداً مزكّياً لنفسه فهو ذو معجزة من الأنبياء أو كرامة من الأولياء ... والذي يقع له هذا ثمّ يكون شريراً ويستعمله في الشرّ فهو الساحر الخبيث

He to whom this occurs in the soul's natural disposition, and who also is virtuous, follows the right path, and purifies his soul, is among the prophets who possess [the ability for] prophetic miracles, or among the Friends of God who possess [the ability for] marvels ... He to whom this occurs in the soul's natural disposition, but who also is evil and uses it for evil, is a malicious magician.[150]

For Ibn Sīnā, prophetic miracles, saintly marvels, and magic are all manifestations of the same phenomenon, which has a natural rather than a supernatural provenance. What distinguishes a prophet from a magician is only the purity of their souls and the righteousness of their actions.[151] Prophets use their (natural) abilities to effect good, while magicians use them for evil purposes. A standard example that Ibn Sīnā provides for this is the evil eye.[152]

Those who consider this far-fetched believe that one body can affect another only when they are adjacent, or when a part of one body is sent to another, or

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ing of this and the following passages is greatly indebted to the translation and discussion found in Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 160–165.

150 *al-Išārāt*, x.28, 389.7–11. Goichon, and Cruz Hernández following her, translate *muʿjiza* as "miracles with apologetic ends;" Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 522; Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 102. Inati misunderstands *karāma* as "magnanimity," rather than as a reference to the wonders that friends of God work; *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 106. On the distinction between *muʿjiza* and *karāma*, see Gardet, "Karāma."

151 Travis Zadeh calls framing the distinction between prophets and magicians as a matter of ethics a "once radical claim" and observes that by the time of Abū Yaḥyā Zakariyyāʾ al-Qazwīnī (d. 682/1283) it "had been largely routine across broad swaths of [Islamicate] society;" "Postscript," 622–623.

152 *al-Išārāt*, x.29, 390.2; *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, iii.20, 121.8; *Avicenna's De Anima*, iv.4, 200.11–12; *al-Birr wa-l-iṯm*, in Šams al-Dīn, *al-Maḏhab al-tarbawī ʿinda Ibn Sīnā*, 360.7. As Janssens has already observed, the text of x.26–27 appears nearly verbatim in *Piety and Sin*, one of Ibn Sīnā's earliest works. He neglects to note, however, that the passage in the *Piety and Sin* includes a reference to the evil eye that Ibn Sīnā also incorporated into x.29. Janssens concludes from this that one cannot speak of Ibn Sīnā undergoing an evolution to mystical thought late in life, with *Pointers* viii–x supposedly being a manifestation of that thought; Janssens, "*Al-Birr wa-l-ithm*," 414.

when the effect is transmitted through some form of intermediary (**X.29**).[153] Ibn Sīnā asserts, however, that there are a variety of natural, physical ways in which such unusual things occur (**X.30**).

Strange events arise in the natural world from three principles. One of them is the aforementioned figuration of the soul. The second is the properties of elemental bodies, like the attraction of iron to magnets by virtue of a force that is unique to them. The third is the celestial forces; between them and the temperaments of terrestrial bodies characterized by certain positional figurations, or between them and the forces of terrestrial souls characterized by active or passive states, there is a correspondence which brings about the occurrence of strange effects. Magic is of the first kind; in fact, so are prophetic miracles and saintly marvels. Natural magic is of the second kind. Talismans are of the third kind.[154]

إنّ الأمور الغريبة تنبعث في عالم الطبيعة من مبادئ ثلاثة أحدها الهيأة النفسانيّة المذكورة وثانيها خواصّ الأجسام العنصريّة مثل جنب المغناطيس للحديد بقوّة تخصّه وثالثها قوى سماويّة بينها وبين أمزجة أجسام أرضيّة مخصوصة بهيئات وضعيّة أو بينها وبين قوى نفوس أرضيّة مخصوصة بأحوال فعليّة وانفعاليّة مناسبة تستتبع حدوث آثار غريبة والسحر من قبيل الأوّل بل المعجزات والكرامات والنيرنجات من قبيل القسم الثاني والطلسمات من قبيل القسم الثالث

153 "Only one who posits that something which has an effect on bodies is adjacent [to them], or sends a part [of itself to the bodies], or effects a quality [on them] through an intermediary will consider this far-fetched" (*wa-inna-mā yastabʿidu hāḍā man yafriḍu an yakūna l-muʾaṯṯiru fī l-ajsāmi mulāqiyan aw mursila juzʾin aw munfiḍa kayfiyyatin fī wāsiṭatin*); *al-Išārāt*, X.29, 390.4–5. Hasse observes that this is a significant deviation from Aristotelian causation, which relies on contact between cause and effect, for which Ibn Sīnā received much criticism; Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 163.

154 *al-Išārāt*, X.30, 390.8–16. Inati follows Dunyā's formatting—which starts a new paragraph with *bal al-muʿjizāt*—and includes prophetic miracles and saintly marvels in the second group, rather than the first; Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 107; Dunyā (1968), *al-Išārāt*, 4:159.4. Goichon, working from Forget's edition (which includes no formatting within each pointer or reminder) makes the same mistake, as does Cruz Hernández; Goichon, *Directives et remarques*, 524; Cruz Hernández, *Tres escritos esotéricos*, 104. Janssens also misreads it in his study on the *Pointers*; Janssens, "Philosophical Mysticism," 51. My thanks to Yahya Michot for sharing a pre-publication version of his essay on Ibn Taymiyya's commentary on the tenth chapter of the *Pointers*, which first brought this to my attention; Michot, "Ibn Taymiyya's Commentary," 128n45. Noble, in his translation of this passage as it appears in Rāzī's commentary on the *Pointers*, reads *ḫawāṣṣ* not merely as "properties," but "occult properties." He also inserts "occult" between brackets (presumably indicating the term's absence in his source) before the term "force" (*quwwa*) as it applies to magnets, and before "correspondence" (*munāsaba*). Noble's own characterization of Ibn Sīnā's explanation of magnetism as naturalistic suggests it is anything but occult. He sees talismans, however,

One way for these oddities to occur, then, is by means of the dispositions of the soul being discussed here. Another is a result of the unique properties of elemental bodies, such as occurs with magnetism. Another is by means of celestial forces. An example of the first type is magic (*siḥr*), much like prophetic miracles and saintly marvels. This reiterates that for Ibn Sīnā, magic and miracles are two sides of the same coin. An example of the second type is natural magic (*al-nīranjāt*).[155] And an example of the third type is talismans.[156]

In the final section—**X.31**—Ibn Sīnā gives his reader a piece of advice. He admonishes him that to consider something to be false merely because the proof for it remains unclear is rash and stupid; it is what commoners do, not philosophers. Rather, one should suspend one's judgment and accept the possibility of unusual phenomena until their impossibility has been proven demonstrably.[157]

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which involve the human soul interacting with celestial forces, as occupying a "liminal space" between natural and occult; Noble, *Philosophising the Occult*, 22–23.

155 In his *Divisions of Philosophy*, Ibn Sīnā lists *nīranjāt* among the "divisions of derived natural philosophy" (*aqsām al-ḥikma al-farʿiyya al-ṭabīʿiyya*). Therein, he says that the goal of *nīranjāt* is "to mix powers of the earthly realm's substances so that there originate from them a power from which a strange act proceeds" (*tamzīju l-quwā fī jawāhiri l-ʿālami l-arḍiyyi li-yaḥduṯa ʿan-hā quwwatun yaṣduru ʿan-hā fiʿlun ġarībun*); *Aqsām al-ḥikma*, in Šams al-Dīn, *al-Maḏhab al-tarbawī*, 266.16–17. For a French translation of Ibn Sīnā's *Division of Philosophy*, see Michot, "Les sciences." In *Risālat al-Nīranjāt*, a pseudepigraphic text attributed to Ibn Sīnā, *nīranjāt* is described as "the mixing and processing of ingredients, the recitation of magical words, the burning of incense, and the making of figurines, in order to manipulate spiritual forces;" Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 494; quoting from Burnett, "Nīranj," 42. According to Burnett, *nīranj* is "from the Middle Persian word 'nerank,' used for an incantation or ritual formula;" "The Three Divisions of Arabic Magic," 44. Hasse translates *al-nīranjāt* as natural magic, while Janssens translates it as "incantations," and Michot as "white magic;" Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 162; Janssens, "Philosophical Mysticism," 51; Michot, "Ibn Taymiyya's Commentary," 128.

156 Talismans appear alongside *nīranjāt* in Ibn Sīnā's *Divisions of Philosophy*. The goal of talismans, he says, is to "mix the celestial powers with the powers of some of the earthly bodies in order to create from that a power which performs a strange act in the realm of the earth;" (*tamzīju l-quwā l-samāʾiyyati bi-quwā baʿḍi l-ajrāmi l-arḍiyyati li-yataʾallafa min ḍālika quwwatun tafʿalu fiʿlan ġarīban fī ʿālami l-arḍi*); *Aqsām al-ḥikma*, in Šams al-Dīn, *al-Maḏhab al-tarbawī*, 266.14–15.

157 *al-Išārāt*, X.31, 391.

4 Naturalizing the Supernatural

Far from being the veiled truths of mystical secrets, the *asrār* of this chapter are the very teachings that can be found in books of natural philosophy. These books point to the scientific, naturalistic explanations for uncommon events to which others may commonly ascribe supernatural origins: miraculous and wondrous acts of prophets and Friends of God, as well as the malicious acts of magicians. As with the nature of the intellect in *Pointers* VII, intellectual attainment and pleasure in *Pointers* VIII, and the path of intellectual perfection in *Pointers* IX, the rational soul and its helpers (the faculties of Imagination and Estimation) play starring roles in the account of how knowers can fast for extended periods of time, perform feats of strength, gain knowledge of the Unseen, and affect bodies in the elemental world. These strange events issue not from mystical knowledge or abilities, nor from a supernatural gift. Rather, they are the product of the human rational soul's consubstantiality with the celestial souls, the predisposition and purity of the body, and interactions between the body's faculties, the rational soul, and elemental matter.

As has been the case with the past three chapters, there are abundant parallels between *Pointers* X and the content of Ibn Sīnā's other works. Ibn Sīnā borrows the language in X.25–26 and X.29 almost verbatim from passages in *Piety and Sin*, one of his earliest works. While this is the best example of direct borrowing in this chapter, it is far from the only.

The tenth chapter of the *Pointers* is, like the three chapters preceding it, a synthesis of Ibn Sīnā's epistemology, psychology, and cosmology, in which he draws heavily on relevant chapters from prior works spanning the course of his career. In terms of ideas, there is little new to be found here.[158] Where this chapter digresses from its counterparts in Ibn Sīnā's other philosophical summae is the central role of the "knower," as was the case with *Pointers* IX. Ibn Sīnā's exemplification of the knower, rather than the prophet, in this chapter reflects his recognition that prophets do not enjoy a monopoly over the powers discussed here. These may belong, in varying degrees and efficaciousness, not only to prophets, but also to philosophers, evil magicians, soothsayers, youths, simpletons, those suffering from disturbed or altered states of mind, and, of course, certain Sufis. These latter are implied by the terms "knower" and "God's pious Friends" (*awliyā' allāh al-abrār*). Ibn Sīnā's use of these terms suggests that he recognized the veracity of those among the Sufis who claimed to work

158 For something new, Hasse notes, for example, that the distinction between prophets and magicians is clearer in the *Pointers* than in the *Cure*; *Avicenna's De Anima*, 162.

certain wonders. It does not suggest, however, that Ibn Sīnā accepted how the Sufis, themselves, explained such phenomena. Ibn Sīnā's explanations for them, as I have shown, are firmly rooted in his empiricist, naturalistic philosophy. The insistence on the part of some scholars to label this chapter as one of Ibn Sīnā's "Sufi chapters," or as elaborating part of his Sufi or mystical philosophy, ignores the attribution of these powers to such disparate characters as those mentioned above, and effaces the universalizing quality of Ibn Sīnā's philosophy. He attempts here to provide a scientific explanation grounded, as he puts it, in well-known principles of natural philosophy, for *all* instances of feats of strength, Imaginative knowledge, and motive powers.

This chapter also departs from other Avicennian summae in the combination of ideas found in it. Like *Pointers* VIII, this chapter deals in part with questions of what Ibn Sīnā calls "the return" (*al-maʿād*), the ultimate destination of the human soul in the afterlife. For this reason, one finds material here that also appears in the final chapters of the *Cure*, including Metaphysics IX.7 and X.1. Ibn Sīnā copied Metaphysics IX.7 of the *Cure* from *Lesser Destination* XV, and copied it again in the metaphysics of the *Salvation*. All of these share a focus on the ultimate destination of the human soul; and, with the exception of *Lesser Destination* XV, feature *al-maʿād* in their titles.[159]

While discussions of prophecy also appear together with discussions of *al-maʿād* at the end of these works, the material that Ibn Sīnā draws on for his discussion of prophetic miracles in *Pointers* X can be found in *Guidance* III.4–5, which discuss the connection between the celestial and earthly realms and prophecy; *Lesser Destination* XIII, on the proof of prophecy; the De Anima of the *Cure*, specifically I.5 and IV.2 and IV.4, which deal with the Common Sense, Imagination and veridical dreams, and the rational soul and telekinesis. Because of this, *Pointers* X more closely resembles the concluding sections of the *Provenance and Destination* (III.17–20), which address Imaginative and motive prophecy, than it does the concluding chapters of his other summae. It does not, however, map fully onto any given prior text. This, as I have already suggested, is due to *Pointers* VII–X's being Ibn Sīnā's fullest exposition of his Metaphysics of the Rational Soul.

It is not merely the content where we find similarities, however, but also the language. On three occasions (X.18, 19, and 26), Ibn Sīnā exhorts his reader not to consider the matter at hand to be far-fetched (*lam yabʿud*). On one of those occasions, he employs the energetic *nūn* (X.26, *fa-lā tastabʿidanna*), which he

159 *Lesser Destination* XV mirrors *Pointers* VIII insofar as the titles of both have to do with happiness (*al-saʿāda*), which Ibn Sīnā clearly considered an alternative label to *al-maʿād*.

uses three other times (X.7, *lā yataʿassaranna*; and X.10 and X.26, *la tastankiranna*) to admonish his reader not to deny the reality of what he reads. This is precisely the language that he uses when discussing similar matters in *Guidance* (*lā yabʿud*),[160] *Provenance and Destination* (*lā yabʿud*),[161] and *Lesser Destination* (*lā yataʿajjabanna*).[162] These similarities, which appear in texts as early as 403/1013 and as late as 425/1034, are not the result of copying passages from one text to another. What they may show is the persistent resistance he received to his explanation of the inner meanings of nature's secrets.

The endurance of what Ibn Sīnā saw as misguided beliefs among his contemporaries would preview the longevity in modern scholarship of attributing mysticism/Sufism to Ibn Sīnā. I present, and attempt to refute, many such attributions in the next chapter.

160 *al-Hidāya*, III.4, 288.8.
161 *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, III.20, 121.6.
162 *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, XIII, 120.1.

CHAPTER 5

Returning to Ibn Sīnā's Mysticism/Sufism

In the introduction, I identified several elements that scholars regularly associate with mysticism and Sufism. I would like now to return to these and then address common ways how scholars have characterized Ibn Sīnā's philosophy as mystical or Sufi. Beginning with the elements, they include:

1. Emanationist cosmology (mysticism)
2. Subjugation of the body (mysticism and Sufism)
3. Asceticism (mysticism and Sufism)
4. Esotericism (mysticism and Sufism)
5. Non- or supra-rational epistemology (mysticism and Sufism)
6. Ability to convey esoteric knowledge via ritual practices (Sufism)
7. Soul's union with the divine (mysticism and Sufism)
8. Affective response to that union (mysticism and Sufism)
9. Ineffability of 7–8 (mysticism and Sufism)
10. Union is pursued through a master-disciple relationship that exists within a broader community (Sufism)
11. Certain individuals are able, through their unique knowledge and/or relationship with the divine, to perform miracles or marvels (mysticism and Sufism)

Of these, I acknowledge that there is no controversy over items 1–4 and 11. Ibn Sīnā undoubtedly elaborated an emanationist cosmology informed by Neoplatonism. He denigrated the body and advocated training the corporeal faculties of Imagination and Estimation to support the rational soul. While I would not go so far as to say that he advocated asceticism—he certainly was no ascetic in his own life—he does, at times, characterize the knower in a manner that would accord with asceticism. He was, as I elaborate in the introduction, clearly an esotericist, if we understand this in terms of his philosophical elitism. And, as the prior chapter made clear, Ibn Sīnā sought to explain miracles and marvels by means of the principles of natural philosophy.

I will reiterate what I accepted in the introduction: if these attributes, individually or collectively, are sufficient to declare Ibn Sīnā's philosophy mystical and/or Sufi, then mystical/Sufi it is. But any assertion of Ibn Sīnā's mysticism or Sufism based on those elements alone must acknowledge these limitations and that the remaining items—most especially a non- or supra-rational epistemology and the soul's union with the divine—are much more controversial. I believe, however, that what I have presented in the preceding chapters

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suffices to demonstrate conclusively the inaccuracy of claiming that Ibn Sīnā developed a so-called non-standard epistemology, or that the he saw union with the divine as the ultimate perfection of the rational soul. Yet, several scholars have advanced such arguments, often relying on the *Pointers and Reminders* when doing so. In the next sections, I will review a representative sample of these arguments and explain how they fail to establish their claims.

1 Non-standard Epistemology

The theory of Ibn Sīnā's epistemological mysticism/Sufism rests on the idea that in the *Pointers*—and his other allegedly mystical works—he develops a non-standard theory of knowledge that allows for a non-rational or supra-rational acquisition of knowledge. Meryem Sebti connects this to the affective response that such knowledge yields. She clarifies that "by mystical way, I understand a non-exclusively rational mode of knowledge that apprehends its object not by a discursive mode, but in a joy-inducing manner."[1] Sebti points to Louis Gardet's definition of "mystical experience" to explain what she means by "joy-inducing": "we call mystical experience any joy-inducing, pleasurable experience of an absolute." She adds that Gardet himself clarifies that by experience he means "knowledge through a shared nature;" by "joy-inducing" he means, "an intensely experienced grasping of a total and fully satisfying reality."[2] As we have seen, Ibn Sīnā thoroughly discusses the affective response to contemplating universal truths in *Pointers* VIII. This alone, however, does not suffice to label his philosophy mysticism. Sebti's second characteristic—that the knowledge is acquired in a non-rational manner—nowhere appears in the *Pointers*.[3]

Sebti also follows Gardet in observing that Ibn Sīnā's mystical union is not an ontological union—in which one substance unites with another—but an epistemic one. She is not alone in doing so; Maria de Cillis likewise cites Gardet in this regard. Maintaining an epistemic union over an ontological union, Sebti observes, is necessary to preserve the identity and individuality of the human soul: Ibn Sīnā "categorically rejects the idea that one thing can ontologically

1 Sebti, "La notion de *mušāhada*," 159.

2 Sebti, 159n1; quoting Gardet, *La Mystique*, 5.

3 It is worth reiterating that Ibn Sīnā's theory of Guessing Correctly (*ḥads*) may be considered non-discursive insofar as it is immediate or nearly so, but it is certainly not non-rational, as it is a power of the theoretical intellect and the knowledge acquired thereby is intellectual in essence.

be identified with another."[4] Yet, in her recent monograph on Ibn Sīnā, Sebti also remarks that after a person's death, "what constitutes his individuality as a human being—his experience, the creation of his imagination, etc., does not survive in the afterlife."[5] She elaborates further:

> Supreme beatitude is not obtained by preserving one's individuality, the trace of all the representations that we have created during our terrestrial life thanks to our power of re-presentation [*taḫayyul*]. No, authentic beatitude is obtained when one becomes a pure intellect, similar to the separate intellects, which intellect all. The separate intellects do not differ among themselves by the object of their intellection; they do not differ among themselves except ontologically, by the distance which separates them from the First Principle.

Certainly, there is no doubt that one's memories do not survive death, as they are a product of a physical faculty and stored in a part of the brain. Nevertheless, if an epistemic union does not, in fact, preserve a given soul's identity and individuality, this raises the questions of what precisely an epistemic union is, how it differs from an ontological union, and whether Ibn Sīnā allows for one. I will return to this in section 3.

In describing Ibn Sīnā's epistemological mysticism, some scholars have highlighted his frequent resort to the metaphor of light and illumination. Salman Bashier characterizes Ibn Sīnā's philosophy as mystical illumination, citing the *Pointers* as a model thereof. As he describes it, "the central tenet" of mystical illumination

> is that following a rigorous and thorough exercise of the rational faculty, the human reason reaches a certain limit and is flooded with light. The thinker whose reason is brought to this *liminal* situation becomes aware of the limitations of his rational faculty and the possibility of obtaining knowledge by means of mystical illumination rather than mere rational conceptualization.[6]

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4 Sebti, *Avicenne*, 78–81 (quote on 78); see also Sebti, "Distinction," 32–33. Similarly, de Cillis: Ibn Sīnā presents "the Sufi principle of unification" as an "intellectual *ittiḥād* [union]," but "denies any ontological identification between the human and divine soul;" *Free Will and Predestination*, 83 (see also 84n111).

5 *Avicenne*, 109. This apparent contradiction constitutes the crux of what Sebti characterizes as one of the great difficulties in Ibn Sīnā's psychology. I address her observation, and what I believe to be Ibn Sīnā's answer to the difficulty, in Chapter 2.

6 Bashier, *The Story of Islamic Philosophy*, 1. Emphasis original.

For Bashier, reason remains central to Ibn Sīnā's mystical illumination. But reason has its limits, beyond which knowledge is acquired via a supra-rational illumination. He sees an affinity here to Plato, for whom "the essence of truth cannot be delivered by words and that illumination occurs only at the limit of rational discourse when arguments are exhausted … and the mind is flooded with light."[7]

Bashier identifies *Pointers* IX.9–17—as they appear in Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*—as Ibn Sīnā's expression of the Sufi seeker entering this liminal station beyond the reach of reason. It is worthwhile, then, to summarize these sections: Ibn Sīnā describes how the knower may, through volition (*irāda*) and training (*riyāḍa*), begin to have fleeting experiences of the light of the Truth. He remarks that *they*—meaning Sufis—refer to this as "moment" (*waqt*), and that each ephemeral moment is accompanied by two experiences of sadness (first, sadness in anticipation of the moment; second, sadness as a result of its passing). The more that the knower dedicates himself to his training, the more he will experience these moments (IX.9). Eventually, these moments will come even when the knower is not engaged in training (IX.10). At first, the knower will lose his calm when these moments occur, but he will, in time, become habituated to them. Those around him will be unaware when these moments occur to him. What began as a brief flash of lightning will become like a stable, clear flame (IX.11–12). What Ibn Sīnā here calls "direct knowledge" (*muʿārafa*) becomes easier to the point that it can occur whenever the knower desires (IX.14). This allows the knower to rise away from the lower world of sensibles (the realm of falsehood) to the higher world of intelligibles (the realm of truth) (IX.15). In its most perfected state, the knower's soul becomes like a polished mirror reflecting the universal truths that it possesses. He experiences abundant pleasure, commensurate with the perfection that he has acquired (IX.16). He remains aware of his self insofar as its attention is focused on the supernal realm (IX.17).[8]

Bashier likens Ibn Sīnā's metaphors of light and moment to Sufi uses of those metaphors, with particular reference to what the Sufi Qušayrī (d. 465/1072) says about them in his *Epistle*. His comparison highlights the fleetingness of the light for both Ibn Sīnā and Qušayrī. He also relates the two experiences of sadness in Ibn Sīnā's account to what Qušayrī says about the Sufi moment (*waqt*) being encompassed by two times (*zamānayn*) of the past and future. Ultimately, "the Ṣūfī becomes a polished mirror, facing toward Truth, the ulti-

7 Bashier, 137–138.

8 For more on these sections, see pp. 175–188.

mate source of light. Even as he observes his own self, this observation becomes in the final consideration a pure and self-reflective observation, a reflection that turns on itself and burns everything else."[9] There are, certainly, interesting similarities between the images and terms that Ibn Sīnā uses in *Pointers* IX and what appears in Sufi discourses like Qušayrī's. What Bashier has not provided, however, is a compelling justification to apply a Sufi interpretation to these sections, rather than turning to Ibn Sīnā's other texts to understand them. I have already shown in chapter 3 how these sections can easily be interpreted as a metaphor for Ibn Sīnā's account of intellectual development, which culminates in the acquired intellect's contact with the active intellect.

The same cannot so easily be done with a Sufi interpretation; in fact, the similarities are superficial. That Ibn Sīnā speaks of light and illumination hardly makes him an Illuminationist, Sufi, or mystical philosopher. His use of the term "moment" is, upon close examination, disconsonant with Qušayrī's. Qušayrī observes that in the "moment," the Sufi "is preoccupied with what is most appropriate for him in his current state, performing what is required of him at that time." The same applies to Ibn Sīnā, except his use of moment is much narrower: the *only* state in which this applies is the intellect's contact with the supernal realm. The Sufi does not experience his moment out of will or effort; rather, it is "whatever befalls [him] of the vicissitudes of the Truth, to the exclusion of what they chose themselves." Ibn Sīnā's knower, on the other hand, experiences his moment as a result of purposeful volition and training.[10] Lastly, the Sufi, in his moment, remains bound to what God has commanded via revealed law. Ibn Sīnā's knower, however, is not: "At times, the knower is distracted by what he is brought to, and so he pays no attention to anything. He is of the kind of [people] for whom [religious duties] are not imposed."[11] Shining a light on Ibn Sīnā's metaphor of moment shows how holding it up as evidence of his mysticism or Sufism fails to withstand scrutiny.[12]

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9 Bashier, *The Story of Islamic Philosophy*, 38.

10 It is worth mentioning that, for Ibn Sīnā, contact with the active intellect via Guessing Correctly (*ḥads*) is spontaneous and not the product of purposeful action.

11 *al-ʿārifu rubba-mā ḏahala fī-mā yuṣāru ilay-hi fa-ġafala ʿan kulli šayʾin fa-huwa fī ḥukmi man lā yukallafu*; *al-Išārāt*, IX.26, 366.14–367.2.

12 For references to Qušayrī and a fuller argument, see Rapoport, "Sufi Vocabulary, but Avicennan Philosophy," 166–168.

2 Union with the Divine

The ontological understanding of Ibn Sīnā's mysticism/Sufism de-emphasizes the mode of knowledge acquisition, stressing instead the soul's gradual separation from the confines of its body, ascending to and eventually *uniting* with the immaterial supernal realm. The acquisition of knowledge, be it rational or supra-rational, serves to facilitate this union. This, according to Shams Inati, is the nature of the Sufism that Ibn Sīnā elaborates in *Pointers* IX:

> Based on the originality of the Ninth Class [*namaṭ*], which focuses on the experience of the Sufi, the fourth part of *al-Ishārāt* came to be known as a work on sufism [*sic*], hence its traditional title, *at-Taṣawwuf*. The term 'sufi' is difficult to define, as it has been used in a number of ways. In the strict sense, it refers to the Muslim mystic, one who strips oneself from the world of nature and associates directly with the realm of realities and truths, one who perishes in oneself as an individual and continues in God.[13]

Inati differentiates between a "speculative, theoretical, or philosophical" mysticism and an "imaginative, practical, or non-philosophical" one. The former seeks the truth first through the senses and then the intellect, beyond which lies mystical illumination; the latter relies not on the intellect but on the heart. She argues that, for Ibn Sīnā, mysticism is the natural and inevitable result of the perfection of philosophy, the transition from "scientific or indirect knowledge" to "illuminative or direct knowledge." She explains this by way of analogy:

> Imagine the seeker of philosophy as required to climb a ladder of one hundred steps. During the process of climbing, the seeker is doing philosophy. However, once the final or one hundredth step is made, the seeker sees things in a different light … Taking the ultimate step on the ladder of philosophy and being a mystic are not the same, but if the former happens, the latter necessarily happens at the same time.

Finally, the mystical experience is ineffable: "nobody and nothing can give anybody knowledge about this experience other than this experience itself." It is

13 Inati, *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 4. The reference to the "fourth part" of the *Pointers*, and its "traditional title," is not to its original schema—which features two books, each divided into ten chapters—but to Dunyā's structuring of the book into four parts, the last of which he labeled "Sufism" (*taṣawwuf*). On this, see the Introduction, section 4.2.

for this reason that she suggests Ibn Sīnā must have had a mystical experience, even though he never said as much himself.[14]

Unfortunately, Inati does not reveal on which specific sections of the *Pointers* she bases her analysis. We can reasonably assume, however, that, like Bashier—who also posited an illuminative acquisition of knowledge beyond reason—she has *Pointers* IX in mind.[15] As with Bashier, so with Inati: Ibn Sīnā's use of metaphors of light and illumination are, themselves, insufficient evidence of Sufism or mysticism.

The ineffable mystical experience is presumably a reference to *Pointers* IX.20, wherein Ibn Sīnā declares,

> Whoever finds knowledge as if he has not found it, but rather finds what is known through it, plunges into the depth of arrival. Here there are stages [before the knower] which are not fewer than the stages behind him. We have preferred to exclude them, since speech will not cause them to be understood, nor can expression explain them, nor can statements uncover them, except the [faculty of the] Imagery … Whoever desires to become familiar with them must proceed gradually until he becomes one of the people of direct Experience.[16]

There is, at first glance, a strong case to made here for an ineffable experience. Yet, this cannot be, as Ibn Sīnā mentions that the Imagery is involved in making these stages understood. Furthermore, as I argue in chapter 3, what Ibn Sīnā says here is not exclusive to a mystical experience of the divine, but applies to all experiences. Syllogisms have their limitations when it comes to conveying knowledge about experience. They can demonstrate *that* an experience is pleasurable, for example, but cannot communicate to someone *how* it feels to have that pleasurable experience. This supposedly ineffable, illuminative experience is presumably the perishing in oneself as an individual and continuing in God that Inati mentions in the beginning of her analysis of *Pointers* VIII–X. Unfortunately, she does not return to this in her explanation of Ibn Sīnā's mysticism at the end of her analysis. (I will have more to say on Ibn Sīnā and mystical union in the next section.)

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14 Inati, 62–64.

15 The "illuminative or direct knowledge" that the intellect receives could be understood as referring to Ibn Sīnā's doctrine of Guessing Correctly (*ḥads*). This is something he addresses in *Pointers* III, however, not in VII–X. And this would not qualify as mystical—non- or supra-rational—knowledge; see Gutas, "Intuition and Thinking."

16 *al-Išārāt*, 364.2–7. For the Arabic, pp. 189–190.

Similar to Inati, Maha Elkaisy-Friemuth attributes both ontological and epistemological aspects to what she calls "Ibn Sīnā's mystical thought,"[17] "mystical tendency,"[18] "Sufi and mystical feelings,"[19] "mystical dimension,"[20] "mystical understanding,"[21] "mystical method,"[22] "mystical philosophy,"[23] and "mystical system"[24] in the "Sufi part,"[25] "Sufi chapter,"[26] and "Sufi sections"[27] of the *Pointers and Reminders*. She begins by accentuating the role of illumination, explaining her use of the word "mystical" as the following:

> The kind of philosophy which concentrates on the journey of the human soul from the material to the eternal divine world. This journey is based on the soul's salvation through knowledge and the vision of the light. Knowledge has the role here of directing the soul's interest to the divine world but its final arrival depends only on its ascent through spiritual exercises and experience of different states in which it catches a glimpse of divine light. This is exactly how Ibn Sīnā explains the mystical ascent of the saint in the Sufi part of Remarks and Admonitions [*sic*].[28]

This is, indeed, a mostly accurate and unproblematic distillation of what Ibn Sīnā discusses in *Pointers* IX. It is reasonable to say that Ibn Sīnā explains Sufi or mystical ideas by means of his philosophical system. To explain something is not the same as to promote, adopt, defend, or systematize it. If, however, all we are to claim is that Ibn Sīnā explains mysticism scientifically in the *Pointers*, we should avoid such phrases as the ones I quoted above in describing what he does here. It is clear that Elkaisy-Friemuth sees Ibn Sīnā as going beyond mere explanation.

As she elaborates her understanding of Ibn Sīnā's mysticism, her interpretation loses its grounding in the text. She asserts that, for Ibn Sīnā, "the ultimate aim of humanity is to have direct conjunction with God;"[29] or, as she more fre-

17 Elkaisy-Friemuth, *God and Humans in Islamic Thought*, 75.
18 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 76, 78.
19 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 77.
20 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 102.
21 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 106.
22 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 109.
23 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 113.
24 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 116.
25 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 78, 105, 112.
26 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 87.
27 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 90.
28 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 77.
29 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 87.

quently puts it, "direct conjunction with His *tajallī*,"[30] His "presence,"[31] "divine light,"[32] or "light of God."[33] She observes, in fact, that "the union with the light of God presents the highest stage of Ibn Sīnā's mysticism as he explores it in the Sufi part" of the *Pointers*.[34] This union with the divine results in the "annihilation" of the self/soul in the presence of God.[35] According to Elkaisy-Friemuth, Ibn Sīnā elaborates an "utterly different" concept of knowledge to underpin the direct conjunction/union with the divine light in his mystical philosophy.[36] This mystical knowledge is not acquired through learning.[37] It bypasses the human intellect's typical method of acquiring knowledge of intelligible objects through contact with the active intellect, instead experiencing a direct conjunction with God and thereby receiving knowledge directly from God.[38] Similarly, the aim of this mystical kind of knowledge is different from that of ordinary knowledge. The aim of ordinary knowledge is simply to "know the unknown," whereas the aim of mystical knowledge is to "encounter 'the illumination of the light of truth.'"[39] The highest stage of Ibn Sīnā's mystical knowledge is the absolute transcendence of the soul from its body, the "full annihilation of oneself in the Truth when the soul arrives at true conjunction."[40] The ultimate aim is to enjoy this conjunction, to experience an eternal happiness distinct from mere rational pleasure. It is not rational in the normal sense of Ibn Sīnā's discussion of knowledge and subsequent pleasure, "but is

30 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 90, 98, 109, 116.
31 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 95, 109.
32 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 90, 103, 106, 110, 111, 112.
33 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 111.
34 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 90.
35 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 98.
36 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 113.
37 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 103.
38 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 87, 95, 110. To reiterate: Guessing Correctly (*ḥads*) involves acquiring knowledge without learning or a teacher—Ibn Sīnā specifically contrasts it with learning—but does not qualify as mystical insofar as it does not bypass the intellect; it is, instead, a wholly intellectual process.
39 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 110, see also 112, 113.
40 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 113. She later clarifies, however, that Ibn Sīnā actually insists that the "knower" never loses self-awareness, and that Ibn Sīnā's "mystical system is not a monist one where the aim is absolute union and becoming one with God;" Elkaisy-Friemuth, 116. This seems incompatible with her earlier assertion that the soul unites with and is annihilated in God's presence. Elkaisy-Friemuth's concluding remarks on Ibn Sīnā's mysticism speculate, however, that had he lived longer, or had he been able to develop his thoughts more freely (less constrained by tradition?), he "would have developed an absolutely original mystical philosophy aimed at the annihilation of man and union with God;" Elkaisy-Friemuth, 118.

rather the happiness of enjoying the eternal observation of God's *tajallī*." She likens Ibn Sīnā's mysticism, in this regard, to the "Gnostic Sufism" of Junayd or Bisṭāmī.[41]

According to Elkaisy-Friemuth, then, Ibn Sīnā's mysticism includes a non-standard epistemology, union with the divine (light), and an ecstatic experience of non-rational pleasure. The previous chapters have shown, however, that Ibn Sīnā does not "disclose a different approach to the divine world"[42] or elaborate a different epistemology in *Pointers* VII–X. Nor is intellectual pleasure, for Ibn Sīnā, a mere pleasure, or a non-rational pleasure. It is, as he makes abundantly clear in *Pointers* VIII and related passages throughout his corpus, the ultimate, and only true, pleasure. It is also clear that he does not assert that the human soul conjoins or unites with the divine realm in any respect, or that contact with the divine realm results in the annihilation of the self/soul. As I have argued, we should not translate Ibn Sīnā's use of *ittiṣāl* as "conjunction," given its synonymity with "union." I have also shown that we cannot conflate his use of *ittiṣāl* and *wuṣūl*, something which Elkaisy-Friemuth does in her analysis of the *Pointers*.

Nasr's interpretation of Ibn Sīnā's mysticism—gnosticism, in his terms—reaches the same terminus as Inati's and Elkaisy-Friemuth's. He begins by addressing the role of theoretical knowledge for Ibn Sīnā:

> Reason becomes wedded to the Intellect, the external cosmos becomes interiorized, facts become symbols and philosophy becomes a veritable *sophia* inseparable from the gnosis which Ibn Sīnā defended so vigorously in the ninth chapter of his *Ishārāt* entitled *Fī maqāmāt al-ʿārifīn* ("On the Stations of the Gnostics"). The goal of philosophy becomes not theoretical knowledge of the substances and accidents of the cosmos but the experience of their very presence and actualization in such a manner as to enable the soul to free itself from the confines of the cosmos considered as a crypt.[43]

Aside from the use of terms like "gnosis" and "gnostic," this is a largely defensible description of what Ibn Sīnā says about the knower. As we have seen, Ibn Sīnā routinely expresses that the ultimate perfection of the human rational soul is to become an "intellectual universe" (*ʿālam ʿaqlī*); in other words, that its

41 Elkaisy-Friemuth, *God and Humans in Islamic Thought*, 113.

42 Elkaisy-Friemuth, 113.

43 Nasr, "Ibn Sīnā's 'Oriental Philosophy,'" 250.

comprehensive acquisition of theoretical knowledge transforms it (metaphorically speaking) into a mirror, reflecting the universe in its perfect order (see discussion of VIII.9 in chapter 3). He also often disparages the body as filth and an obstacle to intellection (VIII.14). He refers to the knower metaphorically as having doffed the *jilbāb* of his body (IX.1). The knower achieves this through training the body's faculties to support it in its intellectual endeavors (IX.3), to the point that it becomes only as if the soul has separated from the body.

Like Elkaisy-Friemuth, however, Nasr's interpretation ultimately loses its textual foundation. For Nasr, this interiorization of the cosmos is inherently mystical, as it culminates in union with the divine:

> There are, according to al-Shaik [*sic*] al-Ra'īs, three classes of knowers: the *zāhid*, who practices asceticism and is pious, the *ʿābid*, who turns his thought to the sanctity of the Divine, and the *ʿārif*, who knows through illumination and ecstasy. The sole aim of the knower is to know and to become identified with the Truth. His life begins with affirmed will, then asceticism and piety, occasional tastes of union (*ittiṣāl*) and finally habitual union with the Divine. He leaves the world of illusions for the world of Reality, and when his journey is complete he becomes himself the mirror in which Truth and its cosmic manifestation are reflected. The whole being of the gnostic is transformed by the Truth he has realized in the center of his being; not only is his soul illuminated by It but even his body becomes immune to disorder and illness because of the presence of the spiritual light within the tabernacle of the heart.[44]

Nasr's formulation of what he calls Ibn Sīnā's esoteric philosophy relies on a misunderstanding of several sections from *Pointers* IX and X. He begins with IX.2, wherein Ibn Sīnā clearly delineates what separates knowers from non-knowers. Ascetics (sg. *zāhid*), worshippers (sg. *ʿābid*), and knowers (sg. *ʿārif*) do not, as Nasr suggests, form three levels in a hierarchy of knowers. Ascetics, as we have seen, abstain from pleasures and possessions in this world, while worshippers engage in prayer, fasting, and other rituals. Ibn Sīnā adds in the following section (IX.3)—ignored by Nasr—that ascetics and worshippers see these activities merely as transactions: avoiding pleasure in this life acts as a down payment for pleasure, and a safeguard from torment, in the next. It is only knowers who turn their thought (*fikr*) to the sanctity of the Divine and who receive "illumination of the light of the Truth." As I have argued, this is

44 Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, 264–265.

an allusion to the rational thought in which the soul engages in order to discern the middle terms of syllogisms, which leads to the intellect's receipt of intelligibles. Ibn Sīnā's use of "illumination" here is no more than recourse to a common metaphor.

Nasr appears to be referring to *Pointers* IX.20, and perhaps also IX.17, when he says that the knower's aim in acquiring this knowledge is to become identified with the Truth, which then leads to habitual union with the Divine. This union amounts to leaving the lower realm of illusion for the higher realm of reality, for which Nasr refers to IX.15. Finally, this journey so transforms the knower that his body becomes insusceptible to illness and disorder; here, Nasr refers to X.4.[45]

Ibn Sīnā affirms in IX.20 that the knower's motive is not the mere acquisition of knowledge, but to find "what is known through it;" and that whoever does so "plunges into the depths of arrival."[46] The knower's aim is to know the Truth, certainly, but nowhere does Ibn Sīnā suggest an identity with it. The knower, even after achieving perfection and becoming like a polished mirror (IX.16), or an intellectual universe, maintains his own identity, along with an ability to manage his body. The knower can simultaneously attend to the lower and higher realms (IX.22). The term which Nasr refers to when averring union—*ittiṣāl*, and presumably also *wuṣūl*—does not signify union for Ibn Sīnā, but the contact (*ittiṣāl*) that the human intellect makes with the active intellect. This represents the soul's achievement (*wuṣūl*) of its perfection (IX.7, 17, 20). While Ibn Sīnā does declare that the knower is able to "rise away from the realm of falsehood to the realm of truth,"[47] this rising away is neither literal nor permanent until the knower's body dies. He maintains in *Pointers* VIII that even the knower's soul may only partially achieve perfection and experience the ensuing pleasure while it is associated with a living body (VIII.10, 14–15). Finally, the perfection of the knower's soul does not confer any sort of immunity upon the knower's body. The passage to which Nasr refers, and for which he even reproduces a substantial part of Goichon's translation, can in no way be understood to suggest immunity to illness or imperviousness to injury:

The knower has what the ill person has of [his] natural [functions] being diverted from matter, and two additional things: the absence of dissolution, like [what occurs due to] a hot	للعارف ما للمريض من اشتغال الطبيعة عن المادّة وزيادة أمرين فقدان تحليل مثل سوء المزاج الحارّ وفقدان المرض المضادّ للقوّة وله

45 All of Nasr's citations refer to Goichon's translation of the *Pointers*.

46 *al-Išārāt*, IX.20, 364.2–3.

47 IX.15, 362.10–11.

dyscrasia; and the absence of the illness that opposes strength. And he has a third thing, i.e., the body resting from its motions. And what an excellent aid that is! Thus, the knower is more suitable for the preservation of his strength. What is told to you concerning this is not contradictory to the teachings of natural philosophy.[48]

معنىً ثالث وهو السكون البدنيّ من حركات البدن وذلك نعم المعين فالعارف أولى بالمحافظ قوّته فليس ما يحكى لك من ذلك بمضادّ لمذهب الطبيعة

It is not the case that the knower is immune from illness. Nor does this present, as Aminrazavi puts it, "a prescription [of abstinence from food] for the spiritual illnesses of the soul."[49] Rather, Ibn Sīnā compares the knower's situation to that of an ill person. The broader context is to explain how a knower can fast for an unusually long period of time. Just as an ill person's body experiences a reduction of digestion (dissolution of matter via heat), so does the knower's. But since the knower's circumstances are not the product of illness, they are advantageous in a way that the ill person's are not. Ibn Sīnā is not describing the consequence of mystical gnosis, as Nasr would put it. This is, instead, a scientific, physiological explanation of an uncommon act.

For Aminrazavi, similar to Nasr, *Pointers* IX "leaves no doubt" regarding the "presence of a mystical dimension" in Ibn Sīnā's philosophy.[50] According to Aminrazavi, Ibn Sīnā "devotes the fourth chapter of his *al-Ishārāt wa'l-tanbihāt* [*sic*] to Sufism" and establishes that "mystical knowledge is not only a possibility but a necessary consequence of asceticism."[51] While Aminrazavi does not directly define "mystical knowledge," he characterizes it as "clear, distinct, unmediated, and direct … [It] is not only informative, but transformative."[52] It seems that by mystical knowledge he means "attainment of truth through direct experience;"[53] or, more directly, attainment of knowledge through union with its source. This attainment of the truth through direct experience consists of two stages: willingness (*al-irāda*) and spiritual exercises (*al-riyāḍa*). According to Aminrazavi, Ibn Sīnā's spiritual exercises include asceticism and "such traditional Sufi practices as the invocation of divine

48 X.4, 373.1–5.
49 Aminrazavi, "How Ibn Sīnian," 211.
50 Aminrazavi, 211.
51 Aminrazavi, 210. By "fourth chapter," Aminrazavi presumably refers to the "fourth part" of the *Pointers* according to Dunyā's structuring of the text.
52 Aminrazavi, 212.
53 Aminrazavi, 210.

names (*dhikr*), prayer, and so forth," though he provides no textual evidence to support this.[54] The reader is left to infer how these stages necessarily lead to acquiring mystical knowledge. While Aminrazavi remarks that Ibn Sīnā uses "clear and specific language"[55] when detailing how mystical knowledge is gained, he unfortunately leaves that out when discussing what he describes as a "clear and radical departure from the principles of Peripatetic philosophy."[56] Without that information, there is little to evaluate regarding this supposed departure.

Like Nasr, Parviz Morewedge has written extensively on Ibn Sīnā's alleged mysticism. For him, the "major distinguishing marks" of Ibn Sīnā's mystical philosophy are 1) its emanationist cosmology, which allows for the soul to return to its origin via a process of ascent which culminates in 2) a mystical union with the Necessary Existent (*wājib al-wujūd*).[57] He identifies the final three chapters of the *Pointers* (i.e., VIII–X) as one of the works in which Ibn Sīnā emphasizes this ascent toward mystical union.[58] Additionally, Morewedge likens Ibn Sīnā's mysticism to Sufism, insofar as Ibn Sīnā allegedly portrays the soul's ascent toward union as a process of stages, an obvious allusion to *Pointers* IX.[59]

Morewedge explains Ibn Sīnā's doctrine of the soul's mystical union as follows: "Being immortal, the soul is transformed in one sense or another into *'aql* after the death of the body. The mystical union, ibn [*sic*] Sīnā tells us, takes place when the intelligence receives the Necessary Existent. The 'entire' person, having lost its former physical constituents, can then be said to be united (*paīvand* [*sic*]) and not just *connected* with the Necessary Existent."[60] Despite using the phrase "ibn Sīnā tells us," Morewedge does not here cite any of Ibn Sīnā's texts; the inclusion of *payvand* (the Persian equivalent of the Arabic *ittiṣāl*), however, clearly indicates that he has *Philosophy* in mind.[61]

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54 Aminrazavi, 210. As we have seen, Ibn Sīnā does not actually elaborate on the precise nature of the training (*riyāḍa*) that he advocates for the Imagination and Estimation.

55 Aminrazavi, 212.

56 Aminrazavi, 210.

57 Morewedge, "The Logic of Emanationism and Ṣūfism, Part II," 9.

58 Morewedge, 12n78.

59 Morewedge, 7.

60 Morewedge, 8; emphasis original.

61 Morewedge has observed that, at times, the debate about Ibn Sīnā's Sufism boils down to "two scholars who disagree on the meaning of a key term," potentially leading to an endless argument; Morewedge, 8. That may be partially the case here. His assertion that Ibn Sīnā's philosophy is mystical reduces to the claim that it allows for a mystical union. The lynchpin of this argument is two words: the Arabic *ittiṣāl* and the Persian *payvand*. The

Elsewhere in the same essay, he declares that "in several texts we find the assertion that persons are ultimately to be united with the Necessary Existent." He refers specifically to the metaphysics of *Philosophy*, quoting the heading to § 37: "The greatest pleasure and the highest happiness and fortune are found in union (*paīvand*) with the Necessary Existent, although most people imagine other states to be more pleasant."[62] There is an evident similarity here to what Ibn Sīnā says in *Pointers* VIII.1, though it goes unmentioned by Morewedge.

Morewedge does, however, refer to *Pointers* VIII.9–10, though he does not discuss them. These sections address the perfections of the soul's faculties, emphasizing the superiority of the intellect and its perfection over the corporeal faculties. Neither section mentions anything that could be interpreted as union. He also points to *Pointers* VII.9. In this section, he claims, "the intelligence is described as being united with the active intelligence (*ʿaql fāʿil* [*sic*]) after the death of the body."[63] This is incorrect on multiple counts, which I will address after translating the section:

وهؤلاء أيضاً يقولون إنّ النفس الناطقة إذا عقلت شيئاً فإنّما تعقل ذلك الشيء باتّصالها بالعقل الفعّال وهذا حقّ

They [Peripatetics] say that when the rational soul intellects something, it intellects that thing only by making contact with the active intellect. This is correct.

قالوا واتّصالها بالعقل الفعّال هو أن تصير هي نفس العقل الفعّال لأنّها تصير العقل المستفاد والعقل الفعّال هو نفسه يتّصل بالنفس فيكون العقل المستفاد

They say: Its making contact with the active intellect is that it becomes the same as the active intellect, because it [rational soul] becomes the acquired intellect, and the active intellect, itself, makes contact with the soul and so becomes the acquired intellect.[64]

This section says nothing about the soul after the death of the body. It also does not explicitly disallow the claim that the human intellect becomes, or unites with, the active intellect when engaging in intellection. That comes

passages that Morewedge cites as evidence for mystical union inevitably contain one or the other, depending on the language they were written in. He understands and translates these terms as "union."

62 Morewedge, 13; quoting *Dānišnāma*, Ilāhiyyāt, 37, 102.1–3.

63 Morewedge, "The Logic of Emanationism and Ṣūfism, Part II," 14.

64 *al-Išārāt*, VII.9, 325.13–326.1. This is not the entire section; I left out a short paragraph on how the Peripatetics explained the possibility of making contact with the active intellect.

two sections later (VII.11), when Ibn Sīnā calls such a theory unintelligible (*ġayr maʿqūl*) after harshly denigrating Porphyry in VII.10 as a representative of the Peripatetics mentioned in VII.9.[65] Not only does this section not support Morewedge's claim that the human intellect unites with the active intellect after the death of the body, it is part of a series of sections in which Ibn Sīnā unequivocally rules out the possibility of the human intellect uniting with the active intellect.

Berndt Radtke also mentions Ibn Sīnā's condemnation of Porphyry, but finds that this fails to prove that he was not a mystic or did not advocate a mystical union. For Radtke, Ibn Sīnā is clearly a mystic, as evidenced by the fact that he "use[d] the language of mysticism" and that "his description of man's final goal is explicitly mystical."[66] This description appears in *Pointers* IX.9–12, which Radtke characterizes as "the best description of the mystical union."[67] There is a problem here, however: Ibn Sīnā does not describe what could be interpreted as a mystical union in these sections. *Pointers* IX.9–12 portray the knower's ability to make contact with the supernal realm, which first occurs in fleeting moments but, through continued training, eventually becomes more stable. Radtke solves this problem by averring that one must combine these passages with another that appears in Ibn Sīnā's *Epistle on Love*:

We want to clarify in this section that each existent has an innate love for the Absolute Good, and that the Absolute Good manifests Itself to those who love it. However, their [ability to] receive Its self-manifestation and make contact with It[68] differs in degree. And [we want to clarify] that the closest one can

نريد أن نوضح في هذا الفصل أنّ كلّ واحد من الموجودات يعشق الخير المطلق عشقاً غريزياً وأنّ الخير المطلق يتجلّى لعاشقه إلّا أنّ قبولها لتجلّيه واتّصالَها به على التفاوت وأنّ غاية القربى منه هو قبول لتجلّيه على الحقيقة أعني أكمل ما

65 Ibn Sīnā makes a similar assertion in his *Commentary on the Theology of Aristotle*: "It does not happen at all that the active intellect unites with us and becomes a perfection in actuality for something of us" (*fa-lā yattafiqu l-battata an yattaḥida bi-nā l-ʿaqlu l-faʿʿālu wa-yaṣīru kamālan bi-l-fiʿli li-šayʾin min-nā*); "*Commentary on the* Theology of Aristotle," 93.11–12.

66 Radtke, "How Can Man Reach the Mystical Union?," 177–178.

67 He borrows this description approvingly from Nallino; Radtke, 166 and note 12.

68 Radtke has "unite themselves with it" for *wa-ttiṣālahā bi-hi*. Anwar, who also held that Ibn Sīnā maintained the reality of union in this passage, mistakenly glosses "connection" as *ittiḥād*; Anwar, "Ibn Sīnā's Philosophical Theology of Love," 343 (gloss), 338 (Ibn Sīnā and union).

في الإمكان وهو المعنى الذي يسمّيه الصوفيّة بالاتّحاد

come to it [the Absolute Good] is a reception of Its manifestation according to Its true reality, by which I mean in the most perfect way possible. [This] is the notion that Sufis call 'union.'[69]

The combined force of these two passages reveals, per Radtke, that Ibn Sīnā's "mystical union is the result of two processes."[70] The first is preparatory self-purification, which results in man becoming like a polished mirror; this is the *Pointers* passages. The second process, articulated in the *Epistle*, is exposure to the divine essence. Radtke concludes that "although at the first the duality of God and man remains within this vision of God, in the end the mystic is so overwhelmed by God's essence that he forgets himself, sees only God, and forgets that it is he who is seeing."[71] Next, Radtke reveals his coup de grâce in response to suggestions from Gardet and James Finnegan that Ibn Sīnā is not describing an ontological union: "elsewhere Ibn Sīnā contradicts himself by admitting a union (*ittiḥād*) of the *intellectus* and the *intelligible*."[72] The other text to which Radtke refers is *Salvation*. Since he does not produce the textual evidence, it is worth investigating the three citations that he provides.

The first of Radtke's three instances of Ibn Sīnā admitting a union between intellect and intelligible appears in a section of *Salvation* titled "On the Theoretical Faculty and Its Ranks" (*fī l-quwwati l-naẓariyyati wa-marātibihā*). In this section, Ibn Sīnā presents the relations of the human intellect to the active intellect, from material intellect (*hayūlānī*) to acquired (*mustafād*). The cited passage begins with Ibn Sīnā's presentation of the actual intellect (*al-ʿaql bi-l-fiʿl*). At no point does Ibn Sīnā admit of a union (*ittiḥād*) between intellect and intelligible. I believe, however, that the passage Radtke had in mind comes at the end of this section:

69 Mehren, *Traités Mystiques*, 1894, 3:22.8–12; trans. mod. from Fackenheim, "A Treatise on Love," 225. I return to this passage, and whether Ibn Sīnā here adopts the Sufi concept of *ittiḥād*, in the next chapter.

70 Radtke, "How Can Man Reach the Mystical Union?," 176.

71 Radtke, 176.

72 Radtke, 177. He cites Gardet, *Pensée religieuse*, 149–150, 152–155, 161, 180, 190; and Finnegan, "Avicenna's Refutation of Porphyrius," 189. For a refutation of Gardet's account of Ibn Sīnā and union, see Rapoport, "Sufi Vocabulary, but Avicennan Philosophy," 176–179.

فهذه أيضاً مراتب القوى التي تسمّى عقولاً نظريّاً عند العقل المستفاد يتمّ الجنس الحيوانيّ والنوع الإنسانيّ منه وهناك تكون القوّة الإنسانيّة تشبّهت بالمبادئ الأوليّة للوجود كلّه

These are also ranks of what is called "theoretical intellects." With the acquired intellect, the animal genus—and within that the human species—is completed. Here, the human faculty *has become like* the first principles of all existence.[73]

There is no talk of union (*ittiḥād*) here, but Ibn Sīnā's use of *tašabbahat*—from a verb meaning "to become like, resemble, assimilate to"—may have caught Radtke's eye. Yet, for the human intellect to become like the first principles insofar as it is thinking the same universal knowledge as they are does not entail the intellect's union with those principles.

The second instance of Ibn Sīnā's alleged admission of union between intellect and intelligible appears in a section of *Salvation* on the meaning of pleasure and on God's being essentially lover and beloved. Here is the key passage:

> You should know that the intellect's attainment of an intelligible object is stronger than the sense's attainment of a sensory object because it—I mean the intellect—intellects and attains the thing that is enduring and universal. It unites with it [*yattaḥidu bi-hi*] and becomes it (*in a manner of speaking*) [*ʿalā wajhim mā*].[74]

Here the verb unite (*yattaḥidu*) does appear, but Ibn Sīnā immediately adds a key qualification: "in a manner of speaking," or "in a certain way." It is clear that Ibn Sīnā did not intend for his reader to take this as a literal advocation for union between intellect and intelligible.

Radtke's third and final example of Ibn Sīnā admitting union occurs in a section on the soul's final destination (*fī maʿād al-anfus al-insāniyya*). Here, Ibn Sīnā likens the perfection of the rational soul to becoming an intellectual universe:

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73 *al-Najāt*, 205.11–13, emphasis mine. Radtke (177n106) cites Kurdī (ed.), *Najāt*, 166.12 ff.

74 *al-Najāt*, 282.12–15, emphasis mine. For the full Arabic, see p. 127. Radtke cites Kurdī (ed.), *Najāt*, 246.1 ff. The same passage appears in *Cure*; it does so in *Provenance and Destination*, as well, albeit without "in a manner of speaking" (*ʿalā wajhim mā*); *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, 298.1–3; *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, 1.12, 18.7–9.

فتنقلب عالماً معقولاً موازياً للعالم الموجود كلّه مشاهداً لما هو الحقّ المطلق والخير المطلق والجمال الحقّ ومتحدّاً به

Becoming transformed into an intelligible universe corresponding to the entire existent universe, directly Experiencing that which is absolute Truth, absolute good, and true beauty, *becoming united with it*.[75]

The verb "unite" appears once again, and this time without qualification. It seems, then, that Ibn Sīnā is caught in a contradiction or equivocation.[76] But is he, indeed, admitting union between the intellect and intelligible? If we read just a few lines more, we see yet another qualification to this alleged union:

وأمّا شدّة الوصول فكيف يكون حال ما وصوله بملاقاة السطوح بالقياس إلى ما هو سار في جوهر قابله حتّى يكون كأنّه هو هو بلا انفصال إذ العاقل والمعقول واحد أو قريب من الواحد

As for the intensity of arrival, how is the state of [a non-eternal being] whose arrival is to encounter the surface in comparison to [an eternal being whose arrival is to encounter] what flows in a substance able to receive it, to the point that it becomes *as if* it [intellector] were it [intelligible] without separation, since the intellector and the intelligible are one *or something near* to one?[77]

Of the three instances in which Radtke claims that Ibn Sīnā admits a union between intellect and intelligible, only one appears without a qualification indicating that union should not be taken literally. The one example that appears without qualification precedes by just a few lines yet another assertion by Ibn Sīnā that when he talks about intellect and intelligible becoming one, he means that only in a manner of speaking. The intellect has such perfect attainment of the intelligible that it is *as if* they have become one or something like one, but they have not actually become one. Regardless of however we are to understand the instance in which Ibn Sīnā failed to issue his standard caveat (sloppiness? An awareness that the caveat was forthcoming shortly?), we cannot conclude from this one isolated example (two, if we count *Provenance and*

75 *al-Najāt*, 328.21–23, emphasis mine. Radtke cites Kurdī (ed.), *Najāt*, 293.6 ff.

76 This is precisely what Sebti says; "La notion de *mušāhada*," 161. Inati, like Radtke, sees this passage (as it appears also in *Lesser Destination*) as confirming that the perfection of the rational soul is union with God; Inati, "The Relevance of Happiness to Eternal Existence," 15–16. See Rapoport, "Sufi Vocabulary, but Avicennan Philosophy," 183n131.

77 *al-Najāt*, 329.1–4. This passage also appears in *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, IX.7, 350.18–351.1, emphasis added.

Destination, not cited by Radtke), against all the other evidence, that for Ibn Sīnā "man's final goal is explicitly mystical."[78]

Unlike the previous scholars I have addressed, Shokoufeh Taghi stresses neither illumination nor the significance of theoretical knowledge, instead focusing solely on the soul's separation from the body: "Ibn Sīnā holds that … mystics are persons who live together in spiritual union with united spiritual faculties, who have either diminished or completely extinguished the grasp of the bestial soul on their bodies and no longer busy the spiritual faculties with hardship and violence."[79] Ibn Sīnā does, as I have mentioned, consider the body a distraction to the rational soul, and sees the soul's increasing dominance of the body as a result of the soul's perfection. This does not involve, however, living in union with "united spiritual faculties."

The soul's separation from the body also features prominently in Geert Hendrich's definition of Ibn Sīnā's mysticism: "It [man's ability to have direct knowledge of God] is nevertheless the foundation for Ibn Sina's subsequent attempt at a philosophical mysticism in Islam which wants to reach beyond the way of knowledge to the soul's liberation from the earthly 'captivity' for the sake of combining a mystical vision of the divine and philosophical rationalism, and which reaches beyond the discovery of logical necessities to knowledge of God."[80]

These attempts to interpret Ibn Sīnā as a mystic or Sufi stress the soul's journey from the material to the immaterial world, some with the added focus on the role that knowledge plays in this journey. Ibn Sīnā does indeed elaborate on this in the *Pointers* and many other works. Broadly speaking, this is what he discusses under the label "the destination" (or "return," *al-maʿād*, i.e., of the rational soul), a discussion that features prominently in the *Pointers*. Nevertheless, explaining the states of the human soul in this life and the afterlife does not in and of itself constitute mysticism, Sufism, or a mystical/Sufi philosophy. Furthermore, though Ibn Sīnā does often deprecate the effects of the body on the rational soul, and does see subjugation of the body as preliminary to the rational soul's perfection, he does *not* argue that the rational soul separates from the living body and unites with any other spirit, soul, or intellect. The soul separates from the body only after the body's death—hardly a mystical experience. Additionally, whether the soul is connected to a living body or separated after death, Ibn Sīnā does not advocate the soul's union with anything else, be it

78 Radtke, "How Can Man Reach the Mystical Union?," 177–178.

79 Taghi, *Two Wings*, 202.

80 Hendrich, *Arabisch-islamische Philosophie*, 82. Of Ibn Sīnā's "philosophical mystical" texts, Hendrich mentions the *Pointers* and *Alive, Son of Awake* (*Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*).

material or immaterial. Had he in fact argued that the conclusion of the soul's journey is union with divine light, or union with God, then certainly we could call this mysticism or Sufism; but this is far from an accurate reading of these chapters of the *Pointers*.

3 The Impossibility of Union for Ibn Sīnā

I would like to conclude this chapter with a few remarks on Ibn Sīnā and the possibility of the soul's union with the divine. I have shown that Ibn Sīnā repeatedly stated that the ultimate perfection of the intellect is to become an intellectual universe (*ʿālam ʿaqlī*).[81] In such a case, the entirety of universal knowledge is represented in the human intellect, leading one to possess complete, perfect knowledge. One may see a similarity here to Plotinus's conception of the intellect, in which "the world can be seen as from within the mind," as Sara Rappe characterizes it.[82] As I have argued throughout this book, however, similarities alone do not suffice as evidence of Ibn Sīnā's mysticism or Sufism. While Plotinus may famously have claimed to have experienced mystical union,[83] for Ibn Sīnā, this is just not possible. He makes this abundantly clear in his criticism of Porphyry on the intellect.

As we saw in chapter 1, Ibn Sīnā characterizes Porphyry's book on the intellect as garbage.[84] This is because Porphyry, like Plotinus and Aristotle, maintains the unity of the intellect and the object of its knowledge. According to Ibn Sīnā, the only case in which this obtains is when the intellect conceives of itself; then, and only then, are intellect and the object of its knowledge one. In all other instances of intellectual knowledge, intellect and its object remain distinct: "It should not be said that the soul itself becomes the intelligibles. This is among the things that I say are impossible. I really don't understand their [Porphyry and associates'] assertion that one thing becomes something else, nor can I comprehend how that would be."[85]

It is not just the case that the intellect's union with the object of its knowledge is inconceivable for Ibn Sīnā. The intellect cannot unite with *anything*, in any manner. This is rooted in his understanding of the intellect as being a

81 See pp. 118–119.

82 Rappe, *Reading Neoplatonism*, 44.

83 On this, see Bussanich, "Mystical Elements"; Bussanich, "Plotinian Mysticism"; Arp, "Plotinus, Mysticism, and Mediation."

84 *al-Išārāt*, IX.22, 365.5–6. See my discussion of this on p. 68.

85 *Avicenna's De Anima*, V.6, 239.11–12. For the Arabic and discussion, see p. 68.

substance that is absolutely immaterial and independent (see chapter 1). The intellect does not unite with, or even subsist in, its body; it merely has a utilitarian association with a body. Once the intellect has originated and acquired its perfection, it has no need for the body for its further existence; it needs it merely for its further perfection. Its perfection involves, as we have seen, acquiring and thinking the intelligibles until the point that it becomes an intellectual universe, or like a mirror in which the universe is reflected in its intelligible order. In order for this to happen, the intellect must train the corporeal faculties—especially Imagination and Estimation—to turn away from their mundane concerns and assist the intellect in its endeavors. This prepares the intellect for its ultimate destination after the body's death: an eternal, incorporeal afterlife characterized by unceasing intellectual activity, at least for those intellects who are prepared for such an afterlife. Those intellects who are unprepared for an incorporeal afterlife will become associated with a celestial body, whose faculty of Imagination will allow them to experience the corporeal, sensory afterlife that has been preached to them.

Ibn Sīnā emphasizes that at no point in this worldly life does the intellect ever lose its individual identity.[86] The "embodied" intellect, if sufficiently strong, never loses sight of or control over its body, even in moments when it makes contact with the supernal realm. Rather, it remains "open to both sides"[87]—meaning the earthly and celestial realms—and its command over the body is not "paralyzed."[88] Regarding the soul's individuality in the afterlife, Ibn Sīnā declares, "After separation from the body, each soul will have existed as an essence individuated by the difference in their matters which were, by the difference in the times of their origination, and the difference in their figurations which they had in accordance with their different bodies."[89] As Jari Kaukua has observed regarding this passage (as it appears in the *Cure*), the individuating relation of the body to the soul, although grounded in the temporality

86 As Wisnovsky observes, the theoretical intellect "becomes identical in species, rather than numerically identical, with the Active Intellect, thus allowing the theoretical intellect to retain its individuality;" Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*, 136. Ibn Sīnā's insistence on the soul's maintaining its individuality in the afterlife is in opposition to, for example, Maimonides (d. 1138/1204) and Ibn Rušd (d. 595/1198); Stroumsa, *Maimonides in His World*, 181.

87 *al-Išārāt*, IX.22. See p. 188.

88 Here I am paraphrasing *Avicenna's De Anima*, IV.2, 173.9–12. See p. 195.

89 *wa-ammā ba'da mufāraqati l-badani fa-inna l-anfusa takūnu qad wujidat kullu wāḥidatin min-hā ḏātan munfaridatan bi-ḫṭilāfi mawāddihā llatī kānat wa-bi-ḫṭilāfi azminati ḥudūṯihā wa-ḫṭilāfi hay'ātihā llatī la-hā bi-ḥasabi abdānihā l-muḫtalifati*; *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, VIII, 98.5–6; *Avicenna's De Anima*, V.3, 225.14–16; *al-Najāt*, II.6, 223.8–10.

of matter, is a property that "can belong to the soul at any subsequent moment of time, even when the body no longer exists."[90] Just as the intellect exists independently and individually in the earthly realm, so it does in the celestial. If it cannot unite with the objects of its intellection or lose its identity in this life, so it cannot in the afterlife. This is, in fact, essential to Ibn Sīnā's insistence on the reward or punishment that each individual soul will receive in the afterlife based on its beliefs and acts in its earthly life.

For some souls, the afterlife will feature punishment, be it eternal or temporary. For others, it will be an afterlife of pleasure, either sensory (for undeveloped souls) or intellectual (for highly developed souls). The circumstances of one's afterlife, whether pleasurable or painful, are ultimately determined by an individual soul's beliefs and actions in this life. Ibn Sīnā's commitment to individual pleasure or punishment in the afterlife is fundamental to his notion of justice, at the individual and societal levels, in this life. Justice, he tells us in the *Pointers*, *Cure*, and *Salvation*, is safeguarded by prophetic revelation, which informs individuals of the reality of their Creator and His promise of reward and threat of punishment in the afterlife.[91] This commitment—central not only to Ibn Sīnā's politics and eschatology, but to Islamic politics and eschatology—is meaningless if there is a circumstance in which the human soul can lose its individuality. For Ibn Sīnā, if the human soul could unite with something else, be it an intelligible, an intellect, or God, it would cease to be itself; it would cease to be a soul.[92] He makes this clear in his condemnation of Porphyry's doctrine of intellectual union. If one thing unites with another, but they remain two distinct things, then this is no union. Alternatively, if one thing unites with another and then becomes nonexistent, then the first thing has ceased to exist.[93] There is no rational way, according to Ibn Sīnā, to hold that something can unite with something else and remain an individual existent as it was prior to the union. Nor is there any textual evidence to suggest that Ibn Sīnā entertained a distinction between an ontological union, in which individuality would perish, and an epistemic or "theistic" one (to use Rist's term), in which individuality would endure. Ibn Sīnā's discussions clarify that for him union is inherently ontological and involves the loss of individuation. Otherwise, he would not have resorted to hedging language ("as if," "nearly one," "in a manner of speaking")

90 Kaukua, *Self-Awareness in Islamic Philosophy*, 46.

91 See pp. 167–171.

92 I want to clarify that I am not asserting that Neoplatonic or Sufi union necessarily entails the loss of the soul's individuality. Rather, I am arguing that Ibn Sīnā does not admit the possibility of the soul's maintaining its individuality after uniting with something else.

93 *al-Išārāt*, VII.11, 326–327. See pp. 66–72.

when talking about intellect and intelligible, or to the simile of the perfected soul becoming like a mirror reflecting the universe in its intelligible order. If a human soul were to unite with God (or the active intellect, or divine light, etc.), then it would cease to be itself. It would, in fact, cease to exist. Its life in the lower world would no longer have meaning and, more significantly, would no longer have consequence. Union of the soul with the divine is, for Ibn Sīnā, simply impossible.

Conclusion

In the preceding chapters, I provided a guide for reading *Pointers* VII–X, navigating the reader to and through other sections of the *Pointers* and other works by Ibn Sīnā that help us understand his allusive pointers and reminders. In each of these chapters, I demonstrate that the language and content of the *Pointers* have clear parallels in Ibn Sīnā's other compositions. With few exceptions, these chapters do not portray Ibn Sīnā experimenting with new ideas or means of expression, but returning to his greatest hits.

In chapter 1, I show that *Pointers* VII presents material on the soul, intellect, knowledge, providence, and theodicy that Ibn Sīnā presented with regularity in a number of texts, beginning with his very first composition, *Compendium on the Soul*.

In chapter 2, I demonstrate that *Pointers* VIII presents Ibn Sīnā's standard discussion of the afterlife of the human rational soul, what he calls in other texts "the destination" (*al-maʿād*); or, like he does here, real or true happiness (*al-saʿāda*).

In chapter 3, I show that *Pointers* IX features discussions familiar from the De Anima and the Metaphysics of the *Cure*. The central figure of these discussions in the *Cure* is the prophet, whose role in revealing legislation that is necessary to order society in accordance with human welfare Ibn Sīnā highlights. This is, of course, precisely what he presents in *Pointers* IX.4. The main distinction here, however, is that he presents the prophetic legislator (*al-šāriʿ*) in IX.4 as being among the group of people whom he calls the knowers (*al-ʿārifūn*), an appellation that appears to be unique to the *Pointers*. Unlike the comparable sections in the *Cure*, Ibn Sīnā then proceeds to discuss the stages of the knower's intellectual development as a metaphor for the relations of the human intellect to the active intellect. His choice of metaphor has led generations of pre-modern and modern scholars to read this chapter as the ultimate expression of his (all-too-often thinly defined) Sufism, mysticism, gnosticism, or esotericism.

In chapter 4, I establish that, much as he did in other works, Ibn Sīnā sought in *Pointers* X to nudge his reader toward rational, scientific explanations of phenomena that superficially appear to be supra-rational and supernatural. The "inner meanings" (*asrār*) of these phenomena—prophecy, miracles, marvels, and magic—can all be explained on the basis of examining the teachings of natural philosophy (*maḏāhib al-ṭabīʿa*). As with the previous chapters, much of what Ibn Sīnā says here can be found in his other works.

Finally, in chapter 5, I examined how scholars have relied on the *Pointers*, in addition to other Avicennan texts, to support arguments that Ibn Sīnā elabor-

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ated a mystical or Sufi philosophy. In so doing, I evaluated the textual evidence evinced to support those claims (when there is textual evidence) and showed how, in each case, said evidence fails to substantiate its proponents' contentions.

1 If Not Sufism or Mysticism, Then What?

The final four chapters of the *Pointers* fall neatly into Ibn Sīnā's schema of concluding the metaphysical sections of his summae with a discussion of the Metaphysics of the Rational Soul, which encompasses ontology of the rational soul (VII), providence (VII), theodicy (VII), the afterlife of the rational soul (VII–VIII), practical philosophy (IX), the perfection of the soul through knowledge (IX), and prophecy and miracles (X). They are not imbued with any mystical or Sufi elements, even if superficial appearances might suggest so. Since Mehren's 1891 publication of *Pointers* VIII–X in his *Mystical Treatises*, such views in scholarship have been expressed despite the minimal serious attention paid to these chapters.

We should bear in mind the historical, cultural, and intellectual contexts in which claims of Ibn Sīnā's mysticism arose. The consensus of European scholarly and popular opinion in the late nineteenth century was that Muslim (Arab, Semitic, Oriental) minds were not amenable to science and reason. Their cognitive motions, accustomed to following labyrinthine, disordered paths, were unable to follow the straight, ordered lanes of logical reasoning.[1] Sure, some may have identified Ibn Sīnā as an exception; but he can be explained away by recalling that he was not Arab, and by suggesting that he was not really all that committed to Islam.[2] His exceptionalism proves the rule.[3] Mysticism and

1 Here I paraphrase Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer, d. 1917): "The European is a close reasoner; his statements of fact are devoid of any ambiguity; he is a natural logician, albeit he may not have studied logic … The mind of the Oriental, on the other hand, like his picturesque streets, is eminently wanting in symmetry. His reasoning is of the most slipshod description;" Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, 2:146–147; see also, Said, *Orientalism*, 38.

2 As Renan (d. 1892) observed of Ibn Sīnā (as well as Ibn Rušd and Albaténi [al-Battānī?]), "What is quite remarkable, in fact, is that, among the philosophers and scholars called Arab, there is but one, Alkindi, who is of Arab origin. All the others are Persians, Transoxanians, Spanish … Not only are they not Arab by blood, but they have none of the Arab spirit … Arabic, which lends itself well to poetry and has a certain eloquence, is a very impractical instrument for metaphysics." Renan later questions Ibn Sīnā's devotion to Islam: "To honor the Islam of Avicenna … is like if one were to honor the Catholicism of Galileo. Theology got in Galileo's way; it was not strong enough to stop him;" Renan, *L'Islamsime et la science*, 15, 19.

3 On this, H.A.R. Gibb (d. 1971) once observed, "It is true that there have been great philo-

religion, on the other hand, were something at which Arabs and Muslims, as representatives of the Oriental type, were known to excel. It is only natural, then, that someone like Ibn Sīnā would develop a mystical philosophy, and that this would represent the truest, most genuine expression of his attempts to understand the world around him.

Of course, the scholarly consensus has changed. We no longer see reason, logic, and science as the sole property of Europeans. Pre-modern philosophers in the Islamicate world are rightly being studied for the serious scholars they were. Their work is, with good reason, being placed in the broader context of the history of science and philosophy.[4] Yet, so long as we see Ibn Sīnā use the word *ʿārif* and, against all evidence, think "mystic;" or *maʿrifa* and think mysticism/Sufism; or *ittiṣāl* and think union with the divine, we are—wittingly or not—perpetuating the long-discarded notion that mysticism is what Muslims do best.

Of the works that Mehren included in his publication of what he called Ibn Sīnā's mystical treatises, the *Pointers* is without a doubt the most significant. It is the only philosophical summa among them. Others are short treatises on specific topics; some are likely to be spurious. None received anywhere near as much attention from the Postclassical tradition as did the *Pointers*. If there can be agreement that the *Pointers* does not represent a deviation from Ibn Sīnā's standard philosophy toward mysticism or Sufism, the edifice of the argument that Ibn Sīnā developed a mystical/Sufi philosophy alongside his rationalist one loses its foundation. If this foundation has been crumbling with the publication in recent years of studies concluding that Ibn Sīnā did not allow room for mysticism/Sufism in his philosophy, the conclusions of this study transform the crumble into a tumble.

Allow me to illustrate in sharper relief what the preceding chapters have been building toward. Clear, undeniable parallels between *Pointers* VII–X and the rest of Ibn Sīnā's corpus abound. These texts include, in chronological order:

Compendium on the Soul (~387/997)
Piety and Sin
Gift

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sophers among the Muslim peoples and that some of them were Arabs, but they were rare exceptions. The Arab mind, whether in relation to the outer world or in relation to the processes of thought, cannot throw off its intense feeling for the separateness and individuality of the concrete events … It is this, too, which explains … the aversion of the Muslims from the thought-processes of rationalism;" Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, 7; see also, Mahdi, "Orientalism," 87–88; and Said, *Orientalism*, 105–106.

4 See, for example, Adamson, *History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps*.

Epistle on Love (~390/1000)
Provenance and Destination (403/1013)
Immolation Destination (~402–414/1012–1024)
Lesser Destination (~404/1014)
Elements of Philosophy (404–405/1014–1015)
Guidance (414/1023)
Cure (~411–418/1020–1027)
Salvation (~417–418/1026–1027)
Philosophy for 'Alā' al-Dawla (~418/1027)
Discussions (~418–428/1027–1037)
Notes (~418–428/1027–1037)
Commentary on Book Lambda *of Aristotle's* Metaphysics (420/1029)
Commentary on the Theology of Aristotle (419–420/1028–1029)
On the Rational Soul (~428/1037)

Few have or would now claim that Ibn Sīnā's entire philosophical corpus is mystical or Sufi. There is a reason why Mehren did not include the *Cure* in his publication of Ibn Sīnā's allegedly mystical treatises. Nasr does not see the *Cure* as belonging to Ibn Sīnā's so-called esoteric oeuvre. Yet, if the final chapters of the *Pointers* do, as so many have claimed, represent Ibn Sīnā's mysticism/Sufism, this is precisely the conclusion that is forced upon us. The consistency between the *Pointers* and the rest of Ibn Sīnā's corpus leaves us with only two stark alternatives: Ibn Sīnā's whole corpus—his entire philosophical system—is mystical/Sufi, or none of it is.

A third, middling alternative—that the *Pointers* represents Ibn Sīnā's true beliefs, a late-in-life turn toward mysticism/Sufism, or part of an esoteric subset of his works—cannot stand once we recognize the *Pointers*'s place in Ibn Sīnā's corpus. It does not stand alone, as his sole philosophical summa to dabble in mysticism/Sufism, a paean to the ecstasy of union with the divine. It stands, near the end of his career and life, as the final comprehensive presentation of his philosophy, representing his decades-long obsession with the life and afterlife of the rational soul. It is kin both to his other philosophical summae—*Elements*, *Guidance, Cure*, *Salvation*, *Philosophy*—and to the monographs dedicated to the Metaphysics of the Rational Soul—*Provenance and Destination*, *Immolation Destination*, *Lesser Destination*. It is, in fact, Ibn Sīnā's fullest exposition of the Metaphysics of the Rational Soul, the best example of his increasing independence from the customary presentation of metaphysics in the Aristotelian tradition.[5]

5 See Appendices 1 and 2 for a comparison of Ibn Sīnā's treatment of the Metaphysics of the Rational Soul in the *Pointers* and in his summae and monographs on the subject.

What remains is the "why." If Ibn Sīnā was not elaborating a Sufi or mystical philosophy in these chapters of the *Pointers*, then why did he borrow Sufi terms and concepts? Unfortunately, I suspect we will never have a fully satisfying answer to this question. Without access to the Šayḫ, himself, our means to answer this question appear insufficient. We can, for example, speculate. Ibn Sīnā made clear that this book was not meant for a wide, public audience: "Keep it from those who would hackney it, from the ignoramuses, and from whomever has not been granted a brilliant perspicacity, training, and practice, whose inclination is with the riffraff; or whom is among the deviant and foolish of the wannabe philosophers … If you publicize or squander this knowledge, then God [will judge] between us."[6] He additionally specified that only Bahmanyār and Ibn Zayla should teach this book.[7] Perhaps from these requests we can infer that Bahmanyār and Ibn Zayla were the book's original, intended audience. It might also be so, then, that the manner of composition reflects the needs of one or both of them, or a request made by one or both of them. But barring the future discovery of a text that confirms this, this remains pure speculation. It is, I suspect, rather unpersuasive.

Our best means to address this question is to look for an answer in Ibn Sīnā's other writings. This is precisely what I attempted to do in this book. The result of such an investigation, as I have argued, does not support the claim that Ibn Sīnā experimented with, defended, or theorized mysticism or Sufism. In addition to studying the content of his works, we can also look to what Ibn Sīnā said explicitly about Sufism and Sufis. He did not do this often. When he did, however, what he had to say was not flattering. In a letter to the scholars of Baghdad, he derides another scholar's understanding of metaphysics as "a strange kind [of metaphysics], suitable for Sufi-talk."[8] In the Physics of the *Cure*, he complains that he is unable to understand something because it "resembles more the talk of Sufis than it does the talk of philosophers."[9] When attacking Porphyry for his alleged position on the identity of intellect and intelligible, Ibn Sīnā lambasts what he had to say on this as "imaginative, poetic, and Sufi statements;"[10] in the *Pointers*, he referred to Porphyry's book on the intellect as garbage.[11] The

6 *al-Išārāt*, 395.2–9; trans. mod. from Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 48–49. For the Arabic, see p. 22.

7 Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 158.

8 *wa-ammā l-ilāhiyyātu fa-namaṭun munāsibun li-kalāmi l-ṣūfiyyati ʿajībun*; Yarshater, *Panj risāla*, 74.7; citation found in Gutas, "Avicenna's Eastern ('Oriental') Philosophy," 163n14.

9 *ašbahu bi-kalāmi l-ṣūfiyyati min-hu bi-kalāmi l-falāsifati*; *The Physics of* The Healing, 1.2, 26.1–2; trans. mod. from Gutas, "Avicenna's Eastern ('Oriental') Philosophy," 163n14.

10 *Avicenna's De Anima*, v.6, 240.4–5. For the Arabic, see p. 69.

11 See p. 68.

fact that Ibn Sīnā likened those philosophers whom he held in low esteem to Sufis suggests that he similarly held Sufis and Sufism in low esteem. He might have considered Sufis to be among those who would hackney the content of the *Pointers* were they to get a hold of it.

We find a less condemnatory remark in the concluding section of the *Epistle on Love*, one of Ibn Sīnā's earliest works:

> We want to clarify in this section that each existent has an innate love for the Absolute Good, and that the Absolute Good manifests Itself to those who love it. However, their [ability to] receive Its self-manifestation and make contact with It differs in degree. And [we want to clarify] that the closest one can come to it [the Absolute Good] is a reception of Its manifestation according to Its true reality, by which I mean in the most perfect way possible. [This] is the notion that Sufis call 'union.'[12]

This passage tells us a few things. It is undeniable that Ibn Sīnā was aware, at a young age, of the content and terminology in Sufi discourses on topics of interest to him. We can say, without controversy, that he was interested in what Sufis had to say. But it is also evident that he did not approve of what they said.[13] Ibn Sīnā does not deny the reality underpinning the Sufi claims of union, but neither does assent to how they explain it.[14] To the contrary, he argues that his notion of contact is the correct way to understand how the human rational soul receives intelligible knowledge, expressed here as the Absolute Good's self-manifestation. This contact, not union, represents the soul's ultimate perfection. We can comfortably state that, for Ibn Sīnā, the knowledge received—be it by a philosopher or a Sufi—is the same: it is logical insofar as it is syllogistic and it is intellectual insofar as the intellect is what acquires it.[15] Ibn Sīnā did not maintain separate, distinct epistemologies, one rational and

12 Mehren, *Traités Mystiques*, 1894, 3:22.8–12; trans. mod. from Fackenheim, "A Treatise on Love," 225. For the Arabic, see pp. 273–274.

13 This is Morris's conclusion about the allegedly mystical chapters of the *Pointers*. He argues that they can (and presumably should) be read philosophically "as pointing to the indispensable role of philosophy in separating demonstrative truths from the growing profusion of claims to revealed mystical insights asserting a special authority to interpret the legacy of the prophet;" "Philosopher-Prophet," 175 (see also 191 for similar statement).

14 Ramón Guerrero reaches a similar conclusion; "Avicena: sobre el amor," 259n60.

15 I agree with Janos's intuition, as it were, that Ibn Sīnā most likely considered Sufi or mystical knowledge as a form of Guessing Correctly (*ḥads*), thereby philosophizing mystical knowledge; "Intuition, Intellection, and Mystical Knowledge," 219. See the next note for why I believe we should avoid the qualifier "mystical" in this context.

intellectual for philosophers, another non- or supra-rational for Sufis and mystics.[16] Rather, he was a masterful synthesizer and systematizer who endeavored to explain all of reality through a single, internally self-consistent philosophy.[17] His allusions to Sufis and appropriation of Sufi vocabulary speak to this. They also speak to the reality that Sufis were the ones (or at least among the ones) claiming special access to esoteric knowledge and the ability to perform marvels.[18]

This, then, is how we should understand Ibn Sīnā's use of Sufi terms in the *Pointers*, particularly in *Pointers* IX. When, in his discussion of "volition" (*irāda*, IX.7) and "moment" (*waqt*, IX.9), he mentions that an unspecified "they" also used these terms, he is acknowledging that he does not have a monopoly on them; they—meaning the Sufis—also use them. This does not mean, however, that Ibn Sīnā uses them in the same way. By appropriating these terms into his philosophical system, he gives them a meaning distinct from how Sufis understood them.

2 Concluding Remarks

The mystical/Sufi Ibn Sīnā has a had a long life. It dates at least as far back as the 6th/12th century, when Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 581/1185–1186) misrepresented Ibn

16 My conclusion on Ibn Sīnā resembles Janos's on Rāzī's approach to philosophical and mystical knowledge, though I believe the term "mystical knowledge" is misleading, whether applied to Ibn Sīnā or Rāzī. As Janos concludes regarding Rāzī, "mystical knowledge … is essentially quasi-immediate, intuitive, intellectual knowledge acquired by the dispositional and actual faculties" (202) of the intellect. It does not, he emphasizes, "constitute a special, non-logical or supra-intellectual kind of knowledge" (201). Mystical knowledge, therefore, is neither irrational, nor supra-rational, nor opposed to the intellect, as it is "grounded in the faculties of the rational soul" (202). This contrasts with what Sufis themselves believe, namely that mystical knowledge is distinct from philosophical knowledge (206n30). It is evident that for Rāzī, as Janos observes, the knowledge that prophets, philosophers, and Sufi masters possess is the same; the difference is in the ease and speed with which they acquire it. Rāzī used the Avicennan theory of Guessing Correctly to provide a scientific explanation for such Sufi notions as illumination and disclosure (*išrāq*, *tajallī*, *kašf*, *mukāšafa*) (201). He borrowed certain Sufi terms in doing so, but adapted those terms to suit his needs, in so doing providing them with meanings distinct from how Sufis understood them (212). Rāzī's theory of knowledge, therefore, is not mystical, and neither is the Avicennan theory on which Rāzī's is based; Janos, "Intuition, Intellection, and Mystical Knowledge." It seems prudent, then, to avoid calling this knowledge "mystical." It is mystical only insofar as it is knowledge possessed by those whom we have come to call mystics.

17 Here I paraphrase Gutas, "Philosophical Manuscripts," 907.

18 I thank the anonymous reviewer for articulating this point for me.

Sīnā's philosophical summa entitled *The Easterners* (*al-Mašriqiyyūn*) as containing the mystical secrets of eastern philosophy and when descendants of the Sufi master Abū Saʿīd b. Abī l-Ḫayr (d. 440/1049) were promulgating his alleged correspondence and meeting with Ibn Sīnā. It lives on in the present, as scholars continue to pronounce about Ibn Sīnā's mystical philosophy. It is time, however, for the mystical Ibn Sīnā to enter his final destination, his *maʿād*.

When it comes to historical scholarship on Ibn Sīnā's philosophy, we should not allow later interpretations of him to color how we assess the character of his thought. We must work only with the evidence that he has provided us through his writings. This evidence, these writings, are clear. The consistency with which Ibn Sīnā dealt with the Metaphysics of the Rational Soul is perhaps a manifestation of his claim to have learned everything that there is to know of the philosophical sciences by the time he had reached his late teens.[19] The later interpretations of Ibn Sīnā's work speak, instead, to the contexts and motives of scholars who sought to mold him to their liking. As such, they certainly hold significant value for research on Postclassical philosophy, but they should not serve as primary evidence for how we are to understand Ibn Sīnā.

As the mystical/Sufi Ibn Sīnā reposes in his afterlife, we must not ignore the events of his life. We are just beginning to explore the long and prolific commentary tradition on the *Pointers and Reminders*. In so doing, we should attend to whether and how Postclassical scholars concerned themselves with the mystical/Sufi Ibn Sīnā, as well as how they responded to the questions and concerns that form the basis of Ibn Sīnā's Metaphysics of the Rational Soul. We must, of course, bear in mind that Ibn Sīnā's philosophical system was not mystical/Sufi. We will only acquire a better understanding of Postclassical philosophy if we start from a sound foundation.

19 The claim appears in his Autobiography; Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 16–17. Adamson has also observed that Ibn Sīnā, for the length of his career, did not deviate from his basic position on the nature of the soul first outlined in *Compendium*; Adamson, "Correcting Plotinus," 61, 74.

APPENDIX 1

Comparison between *Pointers* and Ibn Sīnā's Summae

The following table presents a comparison of the contents of *Pointers* VII–X with sections of philosophical summae in which Ibn Sīnā treated the Metaphysics of the Rational Soul. This illustrates how Ibn Sīnā's presentation of this dimension of metaphysics progressively grew until it reached its fullest exposition in the *Pointers*.

Pointers and Reminders **(~421–425/1030–1034)**		***Elements*** **(~404–405/1014–1015)**		***Guidance*** **(414/1023)**		***Cure*** **(~411–418/1020–1027)**	
VII.1–6	Soul's independence, incorporeality	Physics II.15	Motive faculties	De Anima II.8	Human soul and its faculties	De Anima V.2, V.4	Rational soul not imprinted in body; rational soul incorruptible
VII.7–12	Intellect does not unite with intelligible					De Anima V.6	Ranking the intellect's functions
VII.13–21	God's knowledge	Metaphysics III.5	⟨God's attributes⟩	Metaphysics III.2	Necessary Existent	Metaphysics VIII.6; VIII.4; III.10	God's knowledge; primary attributes; on the relative
VII.22–27	Providence, good, and evil			Metaphysics III.4	Link between celestial, earthly realms	Metaphysics IX.6	Providence, theodicy
VIII.1–2	Intellectual pleasures superior	Metaphysics III.5	⟨Happiness⟩	Metaphysics III.6	Happiness	Metaphysics IX.7	Destination
VIII.3–9	Nature of pleasure and pain	Metaphysics III.5	⟨Happiness⟩	Metaphysics III.6	Happiness	Metaphysics VIII.7; De Anima V.2; Metaphysics IX.7	Intellectual pleasure; Rational soul not imprinted in body; Destination
VIII.10–11	Awareness of pleasure and pain	Metaphysics III.5	⟨Happiness⟩	Metaphysics III.6	Happiness	Metaphysics IX.7	Destination

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(*cont.*)

Pointers and Reminders **(~421–425/1030–1034)**		***Elements*** **(~404–405/1014–1015)**		***Guidance*** **(414/1023)**		***Cure*** **(~411–418/1020–1027)**	
VIII.12–17	Joy and Torment in the Afterlife	Metaphysics III.5	⟨Happiness⟩	Metaphysics III.6	Happiness	Metaphysics IX.7; VIII.7 De Anima V.3; V.4	Destination; Intellectual pleasure; Soul's coming-to-be; Against transmigration
VIII.18–19	Ranking beings in terms of joy					Metaphysics IX.7	Destination
IX.1–6	Knowers and non-knowers			Metaphysics III.5; III.6	Knowledge; Happiness	De Anima IV.2; V.1; Metaphysics X.2; X.3	True and false dreams; Action and affection in humans; Proof of prophecy; Benefits of acts of worship
IX.7–17	Intellect's relations						
IX.18–20	Knowledge and the highest stages						
IX.21–27	Characteristics of the knower					De Anima IV.2	Functions of cognitive faculties
X.1–6	Marvelous feats					Metaphysics IX.7	Destination
X.7–24	Imaginative prophecy			Metaphysics III.5	Knowledge	Metaphysics X.1; De Anima I.5; IV.2	Inspiration, dreams, and answered prayers; Enumerating the soul's faculties; Functions of the Imagery and Cogitative faculties, sleep and wakefulness, veridical dreams
X.25–30	Motive prophecy			Metaphysics III.4	Link between celestial, earthly realms	De Anima IV.4	A kind of prophecy linked to motive faculties

APPENDIX 2

Comparison between *Pointers* and Ibn Sīnā's Monographs

The following table presents a comparison of the contents of *Pointers* VII–X with those of monographs in which Ibn Sīnā treated the Metaphysics of the Rational Soul.

Pointers and reminders (~421–425/1030–1034)		*Compendium* (~387/997)		*Provenance and destination* (403/1013)		*Immolation destination* (~402–414/1012–1024)		*Lesser Destination* (~404/1014)	
VII.1–6	Soul's independence from body, incorporeality	VII	Soul's independence, substantiality	III.9	Soul does not need corporeal instrument	V	Soul subsists without body	VII	Soul's independence from body
VII.7–12	Intellect does not unite with intelligible								
VII.13–21	God's knowledge			I.23	God's attributes				
VII.22–27	Providence, good, and evil			II.11	Providence				
VIII.1–2	Intellectual pleasures superior			III.14	Real happiness	VII	States of souls after death	XV	Happiness and misery after death
VIII.3–9	Nature of pleasure and pain			III.14	Real happiness	VII	States of souls after death	XV	Happiness and misery after death
VIII.10–11	Awareness of pleasure and pain			III.14	Real happiness	VII	States of souls after death	XV	Happiness and misery after death
VIII.12–17	Joy and Torment in the Afterlife			III.14; III.15; III.12; III.13	Real happiness; Imaginary happiness; Rational soul comes to be with the body; Against transmigration	VII; III, IV	States of souls after death; Contradicting false beliefs; Contradicting transmigration	XV	Happiness and misery after death

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(*cont.*)

Pointers and reminders **(~421–425/1030–1034)**		***Compendium*** **(~387/997)**	***Provenance and destination*** **(403/1013)**		***Immolation destination*** **(~402–414/1012–1024)**	***Lesser Destination*** **(~404/1014)**	
VIII.18–19	Ranking beings in terms of joy		III.14	Real happiness		XV	Happiness and misery after death
IX.1–6	Knowers and non-knowers		III.18; III.17; III.14	Things that prophets see and hear; Veridical dreams; True happiness			
IX.7–17	Intellect's relations						
IX.18–20	Knowledge and the highest stages		III.18	Things that prophets see and hear			
IX.21–27	Characteristics of the knower						
X.1–6	Marvelous feats					XV	Happiness and misery after death
X.7–24	Imaginative prophecy		III.17; III.18; III.19	Veridical dreams; Things that prophets see and hear; How the ill report Unseen events		XIII	Proof of prophecy
X.25–30	Motive prophecy		II.9; II.10; III.20	Soul can change nature; Soul influences events; Miracles and marvels			

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